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**DANTE ALIGHIERI**



*From the first edition of "The Divine Comedy" (1308-1321).*

*Translated by the author.*

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THE  
LYRICAL POEMS

OF  
DANTE ALIGHIERI;

INCLUDING  
THE POEMS OF THE VITA NUOVA AND CONVITO.

TRANSLATED  
BY CHARLES LYELL, A.M.,  
FORMERLY FELLOW OF ST. PETER'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

LONDON:  
WILLIAM SMITH, 113, FLEET STREET.

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MDCCLV.





LONDON:  
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TO  
SIR WILLIAM JACKSON HOOKER,

K.H., LL.D., F.R.S., ETC. ETC.

DIRECTOR OF THE ROYAL GARDEN OF KEW.

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MY DEAR SIR WILLIAM,

I AM happy to have this opportunity of recording our long friendship and my obligations to you. The pleasure which I found in your society, when a humble fellow-labourer in aiding your earliest botanical work, "The British Jungermannia," awakened an enthusiasm which your kindness, constant correspondence, and admirable publications have never suffered to expire : a spark of it remains ; and now, when age and infirmities have put an end to out-door pursuits, has been expending itself in reflection on the writings of Dante. This little volume is the result. Allow me the gratification of dedicating it to you ; and of expressing thus publicly my sincerest esteem and regard.

Believe me,

My dear Sir William,

Very faithfully yours,

CHARLES LYELL.

KINNORDY,

7th March, 1845.

**Tosto spero  
Che altro messaggio il vero  
Farà in più chiara voce manifesto.  
Io venni sol per isvegliare altrui.**

**PETRARCA.**

## PREFACE.

THE following are the only translations which have appeared, in English, of the Lyrical Poems of Dante. The greater part of them were published in 1835, under the title of "The Canzoniere of Dante, Italian and English," and comprehended all those given by Professor Arrivabene, in the "*Amori e Rime di Dante*" (Mantova 1823); to that collection are now added a few from Professor Karl Witte's "*Dante Alighieri's Lyrische Gedichte*" (Leipzig 1842); and others from the "*Opere Minori di Dante*" (Firenze 1834), by P. J. Fraticelli.

The poems of the *Vita Nuova* and *Convito* have been carefully revised, and the *Canzoniere* has been divided into two parts. Part 1. containing the genuine poems of Dante; Part 2. the doubtful ones. In selecting the former, I have followed Fraticelli. Among the latter are included not only those which he considers doubtful, but others which he pronounces to be spurious, and thinks he has traced to their proper authors. They have all been printed in the name of Dante, at various times, from well known ancient MSS. which give his name to them; and the question of authenticity as to some in Part 2. is far from settled.

In the present edition (in deference to the publisher) the Italian text has been omitted. This, the translator has reason to regret, as it would afford a ready apology for much that is strange or obscure. It may be presumed, however, that the reader who is disposed to confront the translation with the original, will not be unprovided with the works of Dante. The two publications which have been mentioned, of Fraticelli and Professor Witte, are particularly desirable for that purpose, and are very valuable, from giving the various readings, and being copiously enriched with original notes, and with interesting critical

and controversial dissertations. The German translation, too, occasionally differs materially from mine.

The controversy as to the nature of the *Mistica Donna*, the allegorical lady of the poet's love, first called my particular attention to these poems. It is unquestionable that in most instances they are intended to bear a double meaning, and that the words of Dionisi apply to them as truly as to the *Commedia* of Dante :

\* "L'interno, il mistico e 'l più prezioso della grand' opera di Dante Alighieri rimane in più luoghi quasi tesoro nascosto a scoprire : sicchè in ordine a queste segrete cose, le quali non sono nè poche nè lievi, ella par che sia

Come pittura in tenebrosa, parte,  
Che non si può mostrare,  
Ne dar diletto di color nè d'arte."

Dante Canz. ix. Amor che muovi.

To assist the student in ascertaining this internal mystical sense has been my object ; and with this view I have studied to make the translation correspond to the Italian with scrupulous exactness, line for line, and almost word for word ; the outward and literal sense being the first indispensable step towards a right understanding of the interior sense concealed under an allegory.

"Perocchè in ciascuna cosa che ha 'l dentro e 'l fuori, è impossibile venire al dentro se prima non si viene al di fuori." (Conv. Trat. 2. c. 1.)

Verbal fidelity is the sole merit to which such a translation as this can have any pretension. There is difficulty in making such a one readable, the want of spirit and elegance is inevitable, and it must be acknowledged, that as a representation of the original it is most unfaithful. The character of its imperfections cannot be more strongly drawn than in the language of Giuseppe Baretti, when speaking of a similar work of his own. I must be allowed to hope however, that, if applied to my translations, the portrait is an exaggeration.

"Io non vo estendermi in apologie della mia Traduzione, che, considerata la differente indole delle due Lingue, ho fatta *ad verbum* quanto m'è stato possibile. Una Traduzione libera non fu mia intenzione di fare, perchè non avrebbe quadrato col mio Disegno. Stando attaccato a' miei originali quanto dovetti quì stare, mi fu impossibile conservare alcuna delle loro bellezze ; e chiunque sa due

Lingue sarà tosto persuaso di tale impossibilità. Egli vedrà che il semplice e il facile debbe in simil caso diventar rozzo e plebeo ; il forte e il sublime cangiarsi in fantastico ed ampolloso ; il chiaro e metodico in intricato ed oscuro ; e l'ingegnoso e piacevole in freddo e puerile : Vedrà che i sali svaporeranno ; che svaniranno le grazie ; e che la proprietà delle parole, la sceltrezza delle frasi, la giustezza delle allusioni, il concatenamento de' pensieri, la soavità de' numeri e la musica delle rime, tutto tutto trasformerassi in fiacchezza, in durezza, in dissonanza, in confusione. Considerisi dunque il mio Libro soltanto come un semplice vocabolario, che davvero non è altro ; e allora la mia Traduzione non riuscirà inutile quantunque non elegante."

For a concise history of the life of Dante and of his times, which is essential for understanding his minor Poems as well as his *Commedia*, I would refer the student to a volume of the same form as the present, the last edition of the "Vision of Dante," by the lamented Mr. Cary, to whose encouragement this revisal of the *Canzoniere* owes its appearance.

Professor Rossetti has made a bold and hazardous attempt to develop the mysteries of the poetry of Dante, and of his era. His learning, ingenuity and eloquence, should have secured to his writings a fair examination ; but to the reproach of criticism, their merits are overlooked ; the errors and vulnerable parts alone seem to have been sought for ; and even these are assailed more by ridicule and sarcasm, than by argument. I gladly take this opportunity of acknowledging the information and assistance which he has been ever ready to afford me ; and the pleasure I have had in his uninterrupted correspondence since the first appearance of his "Comento Analitico, 1826."

There are many friends to whom I feel myself greatly indebted for remarks and strictures ; and to two in so particular a manner that I must be allowed to name them. First, in point of time, my acknowledgments are due to Mr. John Edward Taylor, author of the elegant philosophical work, "Michael Angelo considered as a Poet." More recently I have been equally favoured by Mr. G. Polidori, the well-known Italian poet, and translator of Milton. To him, too, I am under a further obligation in his having unexpectedly honoured me by giving an Italian translation of an Essay on the Catholic Spirit of Dante.

ON

THE AMATORY LANGUAGE OF THE EARLY  
ITALIAN POETS.

Love, as treated by Dante, and by all the lyrical poets at the revival of literature, is a poetical invention of a singular character, derived chiefly from the writings of Plato, but blending the beautiful fables of Greece with Christian theology. The philosophy and poetry of Paganism supply the form and outline ; the expression and colouring are given by the worship of the Virgin Mary, the spirit of chivalry, and the language of the school-men. From this association arise its principal peculiarities ; the deification of Love, the planetary influence of the third heaven, the pre-eminence assigned to intellectual beauty, the high veneration of the female character, and the refined nature and mysticism of the passion ; in which purity, gentleness, and dignified humility, constitute the brightest graces in the beloved ; and loyalty, constancy, and devoted attachment to a single mistress, the noblest virtues in the lover.

From the idea, too, of the peculiar spirituality of the senses of sight and hearing, and of their being the only ones with which angels are gifted, proceeds the poet's never-ending praise of the eyes, the smile, and lips of his mistress ; the eyes giving the promptest and surest indication of mental intelligence, the smile bespeaking goodness of heart, and the lips being the vehicle by which every generous sentiment is conveyed. In the extravagance of figurative language, even the tresses of the fair one are made the emblems of her mind, and every beautiful feature is the representative of an intellectual charm.

The stream from this fountain of Love divides itself into two principal branches, the human and the divine, the latter is known to few, nor can be perfectly tasted without a total abstraction of the mind from earthly concerns, and the placing of the affections exclusively on heaven. The former is attainable by a virtuous union of the sexes, founded on a rational choice of kindred minds, and cherished by concord and by continued acts

of virtue. But besides a heavenly and a natural love, the love towards the Creator and his creature, the poet treats every ardent desire under the denomination of that passion; and his favourite pursuit, whatever it may be, whether of art, or science, or a gratification of the senses, is often personified and addressed as his mistress.

At the time when Dante wrote, the jealous eye of the Inquisition made it dangerous for any man whose knowledge was in advance of his age to express his opinions and escape persecution: they were, therefore, cautiously conveyed in poetry under an allegory, and most frequently under that of love. Dante himself, in his *Convito*, informs the reader that the lady who is the object of his love, and to whom all his poems are dedicated after the death of Beatrice, is Philosophy; a term so ample as to embrace every worthy object of human intelligence, and fully to justify Professor Rossetti in the inquiry whether religion and politics are not intended by him to be comprehended in the mystical character of the lady of his lyrical poetry; since he has treated of both so fearlessly and dangerously in the *Commedia*.

The most pleasing compositions of the mediæval poets are those which give a picture of the real affections of the heart in the intercourse of the sexes; and the delicacy with which the passion of love is treated, particularly by Dante and Petrarch, is peculiar to them. Its origin is ascribed to personal attractions, but its nourishment and permanence are made to depend on those that are intellectual. It is the child of Nature, but Reason is its tutor, and produces a regeneration of mind that tends to ennoble virtue and genius in this life, and prepares it for divine love and heavenly bliss hereafter.

When an allegorical love is the subject of the poem, the lady is generally the personification of a very complex idea, and often becomes an inexplicable enigma.

Most of the peculiarities and fanciful ideas of the poets, which contribute to this obscurity, may be traced to Plato; and as a great part of them are found in his dialogue entitled "*The Banquet*," a slight sketch of it may not be unacceptable.

At this celebrated Banquet, each of five guests is supposed to deliver a panegyric upon Love, and the subject is treated under every possible point of view; sportively by some, seriously by others, and most fully, logically, and sublimely by Socrates, who closes the discussion.

Phædrus, the first speaker, in a graceful but desultory



manner, praises Love as a divinity born without parents, who sprung into existence out of Chaos, at the instant when the Earth arose : the oldest of the Gods and highest in dignity : chief author of virtue and happiness in mankind : bestowing bliss that is unequalled on the young, when affection is reciprocal and both the lover and the beloved are equally worthy : inspiring the refined mind with a continual desire to arrive at higher excellence : and capable of elevating the ignoble mind to a level with one born with the most excellent dispositions. He treats the passion of Love as an exalted friendship, capable of existing as ardently between man and man as between the different sexes ; and represents it as the incentive which awakens more strongly than any other that principle which leads to right conduct in every circumstance of life, the sense of shame ; through which the lover, beyond all other persons, dreads lest any unworthiness in him should be discovered or suspected by his beloved ; and at the same time is fired with a noble ambition to equal the perfections and win the admiration of the object of his affection : a principle so powerful, he adds, that if a city or an army could be entirely composed of lovers, it would be invincible and matchless in feats of heroism and virtue.

Pausanias, a statesman, next eulogises Love, as the influence of two divinities of the name, Celestial and Terrestrial Love ; each the offspring respectively of a celestial and terrestrial Venus. Celestial Venus is the elder, and is said to have sprung from Uranus, born without a mother ; and hence the deity Love, descending from her, partakes of her masculine origin ; restraining youthful marriages, when the understanding is immature ; inspiring friendship, love of the moral character, and every bold and manly sentiment of highest importance to the public interest. Terrestrial Venus is acknowledged as the daughter of Jupiter and Dione, and hence the corresponding Love which is her offspring partakes of the male and female character ; inciting to pleasures and indulgences innocent in themselves, but requiring the curb of reason to restrain them within the bounds of temperance ; a curb which too often proves insufficient, and licentiousness, inconstancy, and injustice is the consequence. Pausanias concludes his discourse with prudent advice to a lady who is courted, not to allow herself to be too soon won ; since time only is the test by which the motives of the lover can be ascertained ; whether they be interested and mercenary,

or founded perhaps on the attraction of external beauty only ; or whether they spring from admiration of the manners and disposition, and of a well-formed moral character, qualities which alone are amiable and abiding, and can win the lover whose constancy may be depended on through life.

Erysimachus the physician follows. He admits the two divinities, a heavenly and an earthly Love, and asserts that the spirit of the two pervades all nature, animate and inanimate, human and divine ; and that by their joint influence they form the moving, attracting, and connecting power that generates the harmony of the universe, by a union of discordant principles. His panegyric is directed to Love as the influence of this combined principle, which operates in reproducing all the works of nature, that time and the disuniting principle are continually destroying ; which directs all the arts and sciences to the attainment of their end ; prompting the physician to promote health by maintaining a just balance of sympathies and antipathies ; the religious instructor to instil piety towards Gods and men by a due observance of the conflicting duties of religion and worldly pursuits. This is the Love attendant on the Muse Urania, and is the source of every happiness to man ; a divinity differing widely from that other Love, the attendant of Polyhymnia, and all the Muses indiscriminately, to whose suggestions we must listen with caution, if we would enjoy his pleasures without introducing disorder and incurring the reproaches of reason.

Aristophanes, the comic poet, is the next speaker, and to the amusement of the guests he treats the subject of love in a style of humour peculiarly his own. He describes a pre-existent state of three sorts of human beings, united in pairs, male with male, female with female, and male with female ; each with two faces, four arms, four legs, &c. Their powers were remarkable, and their rebellious spirit provoked Jupiter, he says, to punish them by dividing each into two, and reducing them to two-legged and two-armed males and females only : threatening them with a further bisection, which should compel them to hop on one leg, if they offended any more. To this state of things he ascribes the passion of love, whether between different sexes or the same ; it being nothing more, he says, than the desire of the soul to find its original partner, and to be reunited to it. Sad mistakes often occur in the search ; but when by chance the happy

discovery is made of the true dissevered partner, which is the good fortune of but few, a union takes place productive of the greatest happiness permitted to man's present condition. If, then, says Aristophanes, this good fortune be the best absolutely, it follows that the next best, in our circumstances, must be that which approaches to it the nearest ; and that is to meet with partners in love whose temper and disposition are the most agreeable and similar to our own. In giving glory to the divine cause of this similarity and mutual fitness, we celebrate in a proper manner the praise of Love. A deity who gives us in our present state relief and consolation, by leading us to our proper good ; and further gives us the fairest hope, that if we pay due regard and reverence to the Gods, he will hereafter, in restoring us to our primitive nature, and removing the evils we now endure, make us perfectly blest and happy.

Agatho, the poet, and donor of the feast, follows Aristophanes ; and in a speech partly sportive and partly serious, confounds under the name of Love the subject, the object and the cause of the passion ; the lover, his mistress, and the inspiring deity. After his example the mediæval poets do the same ; but go further, and often form one essence of the three ; the deity Love being only a personification of the cause of the passion, Love and the beloved mistress are but one ; and by a fanciful interchange of hearts, the lover and the beloved are converted into one, and thus the three are united and identified. Agatho panegyrises Love as the youngest of the Gods, the offspring of Venus, the beauty of nature, at whose birth arose every good that blesses either Gods or mortals ; a divinity supreme in excellence, and adorned with perpetual youth ; who like his parent, is all beauty and all grace ; fixing his throne in the inmost recess of the gentle heart, avoiding the aged and morose, having dominion over pleasure and desire, enjoying perfect liberty, and when tempered by reason, inspiring eloquence and poetry, courtesy, delicacy and benevolence, and every sentiment and talent that is good and amiable.

Socrates follows Agatho, and commences his oration, like his predecessor, with a genealogy of Love ; thus seeming to sanction the established religion of his country, which converted every work of nature and every unseen cause into a deity and an object of worship ; though the sequel shows that a pure monotheism was his private creed.

He first represents Love as a divinity, the offspring of

a union of Porus and Penia, of Plenty and Want, and who came into being at a feast made by the Gods in honour of the birth of Venus. He views Love also as a genius of an intermediate nature between the human and divine ; a medium between the plenitude and indigence of good ; between wisdom the highest good and ignorance the lowest deficiency ; also as a mediator between the subject and object of desire, the lover and the beloved. But when Socrates examines the question, What is Love ? seriously and logically, he discourses in this way. Love, he says, in its most comprehensive sense, is the desire of good ; it is that longing after happiness which exists in every individual of the human kind, a mighty power which in various ways subdues and governs the hearts of all. In its limited and appropriate sense it is the desire of beauty : a desire of uniting itself with the beautiful, of possessing it, and retaining it in perpetuity. But beauty and goodness are considered by him as one ; for beauty is either external or internal, material or intellectual, and intellectual beauty is virtue ; Love, then, is the desire of virtue, the desire of a union with a virtuous mind ; and vice being mental deformity is Love's abhorrence.

The desire of perpetual possession of the object beloved is a desire of immortality ; and Socrates refers the generation of all animated nature, all inventions in art and science, all glorious deeds, and productions of genius, to the influence of Love. A man, says Socrates, whose mind has been well cultivated and teems with the seeds of wisdom, when these have arrived at maturity, feels the desire to communicate and implant them ; he meets with outward beauty, and is charmed with it, and turns away from deformity. In his search for the object of his desire, he learns to appreciate the superior worth of mental endowments ; and when he happily meets with the inward and hidden beauty of a well-natured and generous soul, though combined only with a moderate share of external beauty, and obtains its possession, his attachment to the beautiful object becomes indissoluble. A union of heart and soul, of affection and reason, takes place in such a pair. Virtue, its nature and its duties, become the subject of their interchange of thought, and each strives to perfect the character of the other. An eloquence unknown to all but lovers flows from their lips, and the seeds of wisdom burst forth spontaneously and generate a beautiful progeny. The mortal nature seeks to be perpetuated, and as far as possible immortalised on earth, desiring to leave behind it,

when it departs, a new being bearing its resemblance : both parents join in cherishing and cultivating the fruits of their love and converse, and a friendship of the most perfect kind cements them. They are held together by a double bond of union, having besides the bond of a corporeal offspring, another common and joint offspring of themselves, more beautiful and more enduring, the virtues of the mind.

The conclusion of the speech of Socrates is in loftier strain of thought and eloquence, and might have suggested to Dante the sublime conceptions with which he terminates his Vision of Paradise. It is to be remarked, that the profound doctrines delivered by Socrates are declared not to have originated with himself, but to have been imparted to him by Diotima, a priestess gifted with more than human wisdom ; doctrines which conduct the mind by a gradual ascent to the contemplation of the beauty and unity of the First Cause, of that Being which is beauty and goodness itself ; a union with whom is the end of human existence, the sole object of heavenly love, and which alone can confer immortal felicity. In like manner, the divine instructions delivered by Dante are imparted to him by Beatrice, the representative of christian theology, as she soars with him from heaven to heaven through Paradise ; she, ever increasing in beauty as they ascend ; and he, becoming more enamoured of her, and more competent to understand her ; till at the last she conducts him to the Empyrean, where, contemplating the beautiful, the fountain of truth, he tastes the ineffable bliss of the beatific vision.

Socrates, after dilating on the proper study of beauty, both material and intellectual, and on the progress of a well-regulated mind in forming a just estimate of its degrees of excellence, concludes as follows :

To go then, or to be led by another, along the right way of Love is this ; beginning with the consideration of beauties of lower rank, to proceed to those that are higher, in a continual ascent, all the way proposing the highest beauty as the end, and using the rest merely as so many steps in the progress ; ascending from one to another, through all the varied degrees of beauty in bodies, both animate and inanimate ; from the beauty of bodies to that of souls, from the beauty of souls to that of arts, the objects of honourable and worthy exertions ; from the beauty of arts to that of sciences, the objects of right and virtuous contemplation ; and if the soul be endowed with a genius

of the higher kind, she rests not there, nor fixes her attachment on any one of these beauties or mental excellences in particular, but rises from hence to the contemplation of that universal, original, and exemplar beauty, from which everything beautiful both in the intelligible and sensible world proceeds. Whoever then is advanced thus far in the mysteries of Love, by a right and regular progress of contemplation, attains an intellectual power approaching to intuition, and will suddenly discover, bursting into view, a beauty astonishingly admirable ; that very beauty, to the gaining a sight of which the aim of all his preceding love and studies had been directed ; a beauty whose peculiar characters are these : In the first place, it never had a beginning, nor will ever have an end, but always IS, and always flourishes in perfection, unsusceptible of growth or of decay. In the next place, it is not beautiful only when looked at in one way, or seen in one light, at the same time that viewed another way, or seen in some other light, is far from being beautiful : it is not beautiful only at certain times, or with reference only to certain circumstances, being at other times, or when things are otherwise circumstanced, quite the contrary : nor is it beautiful only in some places, or as it appears to some persons, whilst in other places or to other persons its appearance is the reverse of beautiful : nor can this beauty, which is indeed no other than the beautiful itself, ever be the object of imagination, as if it had face, or hands, or other parts belonging to body ; nor is it some particular art, or some particular science : all other forms that are beautiful participate of this ; but in such a manner they participate, that by their generation or destruction this suffers no diminution, receives no addition, nor undergoes any alteration : it resides not in any other being, not in any material or immaterial substance, not in the earth, nor in the heavens, nor in any part of the universe ; but simple and separate from all other things, it subsists alone with itself, and possesses an essence eternally uniform. Here then is to be found, here, if anywhere, the supreme good, the happy life, the ultimate object of desire to man ; which is, to live beholding this consummate beauty, the divine essence, in its own simplicity of form. In beholding it with that eye with which alone it is possible to behold it here, thus, and thus only, true Virtue can be conceived and attained : and he who attains her, and cherishes her till she be mature, will become a favourite of the Gods, will taste of immortality even in this life, and at length will be, if ever man deserve to be, himself one of the immortals.

This speech of Socrates on Love has been the prolific source of the most beautiful ideas in ancient lyrical poetry. It teaches that—in the words of Milton—

Love refines  
The thoughts, and heart enlarges ; hath his seat  
In reason, and is judicious ; is the scale  
By which to heavenly love thou may'st ascend.

P. L. viii. 539.

And in Milton's words, too, Socrates might with truth be addressed,

Well hast thou taught the way that might direct  
Our knowledge, and the scale of nature set  
From centre to circumference ; whereon,  
In contemplation of created things,  
By steps we may ascend to God.

P. L. v. 508.

These steps constitute what is called the Platonic scale, of which, according to Crescimbeni,\* there are six degrees.

1st degree.—Contemplation of personal beauty in a human individual.

2d degree.—Contemplation of intellectual beauty in the same.

3d degree.—Contemplation of material beauty considered universally and abstractedly.

4th degree.—Contemplation of intellectual beauty considered universally, abstracted from matter ; by which the soul becomes conscious of its dignity, is converted, and a spiritual death and regeneration follow.

5th degree.—The light of The Beautiful received into the soul.

6th degree.—The discovery of The Beautiful itself.

Crescimbeni observes that a sonnet may be poetically beautiful though it only conveys an outward sense ; but that to approach to perfection it must also have an inward sense, and will be most perfect when the whole six degrees of the Platonic scale are concealed, with poetic skill, under an allegory. As an example of a sublime sonnet, marking distinctly four of the degrees, and implying the other two, he gives the following one of Costanza :—

Nell' assedio crudel, che l'empia sorte  
Mi tiene a tal, che l'alta impresa io lasce,  
Benchè manchi la vista, onde si pasce  
Per gli occhi, non però l'alma è men forte.  
Perchè le viene ogn'hor per altre porte

---

\* Della Bellezza, &c., Dial. I., Vol. VI., Ediz. Venezia, 1730.

Quell' immagin gentil, che dalle fasce  
 Le diede il Ciel per cibo, onde rinasce  
 In lei 'l vigore, e sprezza ogn' or la morte.  
 Nè insidie umane mai, nè caso avverso  
 Potranno avere in lei cotanta forza,  
 Ch' ella si renda, e ch' abbia a mutar verso.  
 Che quanto dell' inferna afflitta scorza  
 Di fuori abbatte il mio destin perverso,  
 Tanto dentro il pensier salda, e rinforza.

The verbal translation of the sonnet is as follows:—

1st Quartina.—In the cruel siege which impious fate is carrying on against me, to make me abandon the lofty enterprise, the soul is not less strong, although the sight be wanting of that object with which it is nourished through the eyes.

2d Quartina.—For through other entrances, that gentle image, which from infancy heaven gave her for her food, is constantly coming to her, whence her vigour is born anew, and death she ever doth despise.

1st Terzina.—Nor human wiles, nor adverse chance shall ever have sufficient power against her to compel her to surrender and to change her course.

2d Terzina.—For greatly as my perverse destiny subdues the weak and afflicted outward frame, as greatly is the mind within invigorated and confirmed.

This, on the surface, appears to be a mere love sonnet, and the feelings of the poet to be expressed in common poetical metaphors. He declares his passion for a noble lady, whose beauty he has admired from childhood; his resolution to endeavour to win her; that formidable obstacles oppose his purpose; that the lady is absent; but that her image is ever present to his mind; that his love is continually strengthened by it, and can never die; nor can his purpose be shaken; for though his bodily health is suffering, he feels his mental vigour and resolution ever increasing.

The following is a concise abridgment of Crescimbeni's explication of the allegorical sense:—

1st Quartina.—The lofty enterprise is heavenly love; the sixth and last degree of the Platonic scale. The siege, is the contest between reason and the senses, to which man by his nature is constantly subjected. The object which nourishes the soul, through the eyes, is personal beauty, the first degree of the scale. The soul is not less strong in the absence of the beloved; for through imagination she is still present, and the intellectual power of beauty is felt; the second degree of the scale.

2d Quartina.—Beauty finds its way to his soul through other



entrances than the eyes; implying that the soul contemplates beauty universally, and in the abstract; which is the third degree of the scale. The vigour of the soul is born anew; denoting a regeneration of the soul, a consciousness of its dignity, a spiritual death; the fourth degree of the scale.

1st Terzina.—The soul he says, can never be made to change its course in the advance to heavenly love; wherefore the sixth and last degree of the scale will surely be attained.

2d Terzina.—The afflictions of the body only serve to invigorate the soul and confirm its resolutions; which implies, that the influence of divine light is received into it; and thus denotes the fifth degree of the scale.

Whether this sonnet of Costanza be judiciously chosen for an example, or the allegorical interpretation be satisfactory to the reader, or not, the high authority of Crescimbeni makes it suitable for our purpose as an illustration of the poetic use of the Platonic scale, and completes what we have thought might be serviceable to the student, as an introduction to the right understanding of the language of love in the lyrical poems of Dante.

## ANALYSIS OF THE VITA NUOVA.

THE Vita Nuova is a short narrative in prose, serving chiefly as a comment on the poems with which it is interspersed. It commences thus:—In that part of the book of my memory, before which there is little that one would be able to read, stands a rubric, which says, “Incipit Vita Nova.” Under that rubric I find the incidents recorded which it is my intention to string together in the following book.

Dante then proceeds to relate his first meeting with Beatrice, when both were about the age of nine; he describes her appearance; its extraordinary effect upon all his faculties, especially upon three of them, and the lasting impression left by her charms. Nine years after this interview, at the beginning of the last nine hours of night, he has the dream related in—

Son. I. A ciascun alma presa.

Dante circulated the sonnet among the celebrated poets

of the day, and requested an interpretation of the dream. A reply was given by Guido Cavalcanti in the sonnet—

Vedesti, al mio parere, ogni valore.

This was the commencement of Dante's friendship with Guido, whom he calls the first of his friends, and dedicates to him the *Vita Nuova*. He observes, that at that time the true meaning of his sonnet was not seen by any one ; but that afterwards it became evident to the most simple understanding. Dante suffers in his health, nor can conceal that love is the cause ; but finds it desirable to hide his attachment to Beatrice ; and an occurrence, when at church, makes many persons suppose another lady to be the object of his regard. He encourages the mistake : then relates, that wishing to record the name of Beatrice in a poem, accompanied by the name of this lady and of many of the most beautiful of the city, he selected the names of sixty, and found that the ninth place in the list was the only one in which the name of Beatrice could be allowed to stand.

The lady, who serves to conceal his real love, has occasion to leave the city, and Dante, to carry on the deception, circulates a pretended lamentation, many sentiments of which are in truth, he says, referrible to Beatrice,

Bal. I. O Voi che per la via.

After this, a young lady who was a general favourite in the city, and a companion of Beatrice, dies. Dante commemorates her in two poems, with a covert allusion to, Beatrice in the conclusion of each.

Son. II. Plangete amanti.

Bal. II. Morte villana.

A circumstance occasions Dante to leave the city, with the intention of going to the place whither the lady, his protectress, had retired ; as he travels along sorrowfully at the thought of a lengthened separation from Beatrice, and is following the course of a clear stream, he encounters Love upon the way, habited as a pilgrim, who directs him to return, and to adopt a new fictitious mistress, whom he names, and then disappears.

Son. III. Cavalcando, l' altr' ier.

Dante makes the same screen of the lady pointed out to him by Love as he had done of the former, in concealing his attachment to Beatrice. Many are deceived, and Beatrice suspects his fidelity, and discontinues to honour

him with her salute, which constituted all his happiness. Love gives him counsel in a vision at the ninth hour of day, which he follows, as related in

Bal. III. Ballata, 1o vo'.

Dante is perplexed by reflections on the good and evil attending love, and declares that Pity alone can remove his doubts and defend him in the struggle of the will.

Son. IV. Tutti li miei penser:

In the presence of Beatrice, Dante is abashed, and he perceives that his altered manner excites the derision of her and the ladies in her company. His feelings in consequence are expressed in three sonnets.

Son. V. Con l'altre donne.

Son. VI. Ciò che m' incontra.

Son. VII. Spesse fiate vegnonmi.

Dante resolves to take a nobler subject for his poems than the state of his own mind; and since the salute of Beatrice was denied him, to seek for happiness in recounting her praise.

Canz. I. Donne che avete.

Love being the subject of the above Canzone, a friend puts the question to him: What is love? to which Dante replies,

Son. VIII. Amore e 'l cor gentil.

Dante gives Beatrice as an example of loveliness, and of the power of exciting the passion of love, not only where it slept, but where it never had been felt.

Son. IX. Negli occhi porta.

The father of Beatrice dies. Dante meets some mourners who had left Beatrice in the deepest affliction. His inquiries and their reply are expressed in the two sonnets.

Son. X. Voi che portate.

Son. XI. Se' tu colui.

Dante when lying on a sick-bed, on the ninth day of his illness, has a delirious dream, representing to him Beatrice as dead. He relates the dream in

Canz. II. Donna pietosa.

Dante's imagination brings before him, in a vision, Love,

then Giovanna, called also Primavera, (the mistress of his friend Guido Cavalcanti), then Beatrice, close following her, as related in

Son. XII. Io mi sentii.

Dante discourses on the origin of Italian love verses; on the personification of Love, and of inanimate things in general; on allegory, which he says, unless it conveys a clear moral sense, when stripped of its figurative language, is foolish and worthless. He then renews his praise of Beatrice, saying that she excites universal admiration, is the cause of her companions being admired, and that her virtue has irresistibly captivated him; which is expressed in the three following sonnets.

Son. XIII. Tanto gentile.

Son. XIV. Vede perfettamente.

Son. XV. Sì lungamente.

Beatrice dies, (on the ninth of June, 1290) in the ninth month, Tismin, of the Syriac year; on the tenth term of nine years of the thirteenth century in which she was born. This he says was in consequence of all the nine spheres having been in harmony at her birth, and that it produced this miracle of beauty.

He says that after the death of Beatrice, he addressed an epistle in Latin to the principal persons of the disconsolate city, beginning with the words of Jeremiah: *Quomodo sola sedet civitas, &c.* "How doth the city sit solitary, (Lam. i. 1.)

Dante then records the inestimable worth and beauty of Beatrice, and the world's irreparable loss by her death.

Canz. III. Gli occhi dolenti.

Dante composes a lament at the request of the nearest relation of Beatrice, who is also his dearest friend, except one. He voluntarily adds a Ballata, in the first stanza of which Beatrice is lamented, he says, as by a brother; in the second as by a lover; the two poems are,

Son. XVI. Venite a intender.

Bal. IV. Quantunque volta.

On the anniversary of the death of Beatrice, Dante was employing himself in painting an angel, and so absorbed in his occupation, that some friends had been overlooking his work before he perceived them. He afterwards addresses a sonnet to them, recording the circumstance, and adopts

two beginnings ; in the first, merely stating that his mind had been entirely engrossed with the remembrance of Beatrice ; in the second that it was so engrossed at the moment when his friends were watching him. The bicapital sonnet is the following.

Son. XVII. *Era venuta.*

Dante finds himself in a place which recalls times past, and renders him pensive and exceedingly sorrowful. At a window he sees a lady observing him with pity : the effect it has upon him is related in

Son. XVIII. *Videor gli occhi.*

Continued demonstrations of pity on the part of the same lady, produce feelings described in

Son. XIX. *Color d' amore.*

The pleasure which Dante takes in seeing this lady, awakens self-reproach.

Son. XX. *L' amaro lagrimar.*

In another sonnet which he addresses to the lady, he describes, in a dialogue between the heart and the soul, the struggle in his mind between inclination and reason.

Son. XXI. *Gentil pensiero.*

A vision at the ninth hour shows Beatrice to Dante, as she appeared to him at their first interview ; he repents the having given way to an inclination towards another lady ; and from that time all his thoughts and wishes are directed to Beatrice alone.

Son. XXII. *Lasso ! per forza.*

Pilgrims from a far country pass through the city on their way to Rome, to see the Santa Veronica. Dante addresses a sonnet to them, intimating that the sorrowful state of the city is occasioned by the death of Beatrice.

Son. XXIII. *Deh ! peregrini.*

Two ladies send to request some of Dante's compositions in verse. He, through respect for them, resolves to honour the request in an especial manner, and therefore sends them Sonnet VI. and Sonnet XXIII., together with

Son. XXIV. *Oltre la spera.*

The Vita Nuova concludes with Dante's declaration, that

a vision had determined him to cease from writing further upon Beatrice, until he should be able to do so in a manner more worthy of her ; that all his studies were directed to that end ; and that if his life should be spared, he hoped to celebrate her as no other lady had ever been celebrated.

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## ON THE CONVITO.

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THE Convito, or Banquet, is the principal prose work of Dante, and was intended to contain a comment, literal and allegorical, of fourteen of his canzoni ; but was only completed as to three ; the remaining eleven are supposed to be the second and ten following canzoni inclusive of this collection : the first canzone of which appears to belong to the subject of the Vita Nuova.

To this feast of wisdom Dante invites all who are desirous of knowledge. The choice viands, he says, are his canzoni ; and the bread, without which such fare would be unwholesome, is his exposition of them. Great variety of learning is displayed, particularly in metaphysics and theology, and there are many parts of extraordinary beauty and eloquence ; but mixed with others that are fanciful and unintelligible. This obscurity however, he informs us, is sometimes not unintentional, but designed to avoid the commission of a greater fault. His motive, he says, in publishing the comment is principally to remove an obloquy affecting his character, through misconception of his poems, which were attributed to the predominance of the passion of love, but were in reality the dictates of virtue. He reminds us, that although it is a work of a riper age and sounder intellect than the Vita Nuova, that he means not to derogate in the slightest degree from that work, but to throw light on it, and confirm it by the Convito : that the language of each is proper for the age at which it was composed ; the former ardent and passionate, the latter temperate and manly ; and he desires that the lady to whom his affections became devoted after the death of Beatrice, may be understood to be Philosophy.

## ANALYSIS OF THE CONVITO.

## BOOK I.

INTRODUCTION TO THE CONVITO: DEFENCE OF THE ITALIAN  
IDIOM, IN WHICH IT IS WRITTEN.

CHAP. I. Man has a natural desire of knowledge: all men cannot obtain it: he who possesses the food of wisdom ought to be bountiful in bestowing it: of this food the present banquet is composed; and the bread to be eaten with it consists in the exposition of fourteen Canzoni.

CHAP. II. The author apologises for the necessity of speaking of himself; he intimates that virtue, and not the passion of love, is the moving cause of his Canzoni, and that their meaning is hidden under the veil of allegory, and would remain unknown to all unless he explained it.

CHAP. III. He apologises for a little obscurity that will be found in the Convito: he hints that his misfortunes are the cause, and shows how from that he may have lost the esteem of some men, though wrongfully.

CHAP. IV. He adds that he had endeavoured to write the Convito in a loftier style, and with the more gravity, that he might recover the good opinion of those Italians who misjudged him.

CHAP. V. He proceeds to prove that in this work propriety required him to use the vulgar idiom and not the Latin; for the Canzoni being written in Italian, a Latin comment would have been superior in nobility, power, and beauty of language, and therefore unsuitable.

CHAP. VI. He adds that the Latin comment would be like a servant who is ignorant of the mind of his master and of his friends; for the Latin does not comprehend a knowledge of the Italian, and is not commonly known to all who speak Italian.

CHAP. VII. He gives other reasons why a Latin comment would have been unsuitable: to the unlearned it would have been insufficient; and to the learned it would have been more than enough, by making the sense of the Canzoni more generally known than was intended or desirable.

CHAP. VIII. He further says it would be unsuitable, as his Convito is the fruit of perfect liberality, which seeks to confer a benefit on many, to give them what is useful, and requires that the gift should be unsolicited.

CHAP. IX. He proves in consequence that the Latin comment would not have been useful to many ; would not have bestowed what is useful ; and would not have been unexpected and uncalled for like the Italian.

CHAP. X. He confesses that a comment in the vulgar tongue is a great novelty, and he shows how he was led to it by a natural love for his native language, from a wish to raise it to eminence, from jealousy of its interest, and a desire of defending it from pretended faults which many lay to its charge.

CHAP. XI. He proceeds to defend the vulgar idiom of Italy, and points out five causes of the contempt in which some men hold it. First, a want of discretion in the greater number, who blindly follow another's erroneous opinion. Secondly, the pretence of some who would willingly attribute to a defect in the Italian language, the defect in their own ability to use it. Thirdly, a vain-glory of knowing Latin, which others do not know. Fourthly, envy, caused by not knowing how to make good use of the vulgar idiom, which another can. Fifthly, a contemptible want of spirit, by which some men fear that the Italian language can never reach the excellence of the Latin.

CHAP. XII. Having exposed these worthless causes of the disparagement of the vulgar idiom, he declares his confirmed attachment to it ; from his natural and intimate connexion with it, from his habit in the use of it, and from its intrinsic worth.

CHAP. XIII. He concludes that his preference for the Italian is confirmed from benefits that he has received from it, from its being a step to the Latin, and thence to his advancement in science ; from its being the language of his parents, from his having availed himself of it through life, and from having laboured to give it stability by numbers and rhyme.



## BOOK II.

### EXPLICATION OF CANZONE I.

#### THE CONSOLATIONS OF PHILOSOPHY.

CHAP. I. The author says that in commenting on his Canzone he shall explain the literal and allegorical sense, and shall touch incidentally the moral and anagogical sense : each of which senses he illustrates by an example.



CHAP. II. He gives a hint of the argument of the first Canzone, "Voi che intendendo," &c., and says it is divided into three principal parts; and shows its connexion with the Vita Nuova. The first part is the invocation, "Ye who by intellect move the third heaven." The second part describes the mental struggle between love of the memory of Beatrice, and love of Philosophy. The third part is the *Comiato*, the address to the poem itself, in the fifth and concluding stanza.

CHAP. III. He discourses on the astrological systems of Aristotle and of Ptolemy, and gives some necessary notices for the understanding of what heaven it is he speaks.

CHAP. IV. He shows that it is the heaven of Venus. He explains the nine heavens of Ptolemy; beyond which the Catholic Church places a tenth, the Empyreum.

CHAP. V. He then speaks of the celestial intelligences, and proves that the Gentiles had an imperfect idea of them. He discourses also on the two beatitudes of life, the active life, and the contemplative life.

CHAP. VI. He explains the celestial hierarchy, and shows that the particular intelligences to which his canzone refers, are the Thrones, the order of Angels which moves the third heaven, the heaven of Venus, the heaven of Love.

CHAP. VII. He then explains the text of the first part of the canzone, Stanza I. v. 1 to 13, which is an invocation to the above-mentioned intelligences, to hear and aid him in an internal struggle between two affections.

CHAP. VIII. He continues the explanation, Stanza II. v. 14 to 26, and shows that his inward struggle arises from a thought which sweetly prompts him to contemplate the glory of his lady in the kingdom of the blest; and another contrary thought which represents to him her corporeal and terrestrial beauty, and entirely subdues his mind.

CHAP. IX. He first removes an objection which might be urged respecting the contrariety of the two thoughts, both of which are the offspring of Love; and hence a derivation of the same intelligences, and therefore ought not to be opposed to each other. He shows, however, in what way the thought of a superior and celestial nature may be brought to change itself into one of an inferior and terrestrial nature; without which the principal thought would fail of its effect. Then, having touched upon the union of soul and body, and of their separation, he discourses on the immortality of the soul, and says that he intends to speak no more in the Convito of Beatrice, the living and the blessed.

CHAP. X. He continues the explanation, Stanza III. v. 27 to 39, and describes the nature of the internal contest springing from the opposing thoughts.

CHAP. XI. Explanation continued, Stanza IV. v. 40 to 52. Discourses on wisdom, courtesy, and grandeur.

CHAP. XII. He explains the "Tornata," the concluding address to the canzone, Stanza V. v. 53 to the end. Intimating that the sentiments and internal worth of the canzone may not be understood ; but he trusts that its outward beauty, from construction, order, and rhythm, must be apparent.

CHAP. XIII. Having shown the literal meaning of the canzone, he proceeds to the exposition of the allegory, which refers to his love of Philosophy, the lady to whom he became devotedly attached after the death of Beatrice, having sought consolation and found it in her, after reading the works of Boetius and Cicero.

CHAP. XIV. He proceeds to explain the allegory concerning the third heaven, to whose intelligences the canzone is addressed, and shows the correspondence of the nine heavens to the nine sciences, and of the first seven to Trivium and Quadrivium.

CHAP. XV. He proceeds further to show the similitude between the superior heavens and the sciences, physics and metaphysics, to which they correspond ; the Empyreum being the symbol of Theology.

CHAP. XVI. Having shown in the two preceding chapters that the third heaven corresponds to the science of rhetoric, and the intelligences whom he addresses to the rhetoricians, he explains the allegorical sense of various passages of the canzone, and concludes with saying that the sweetness of the instructions of Boetius and Cicero had led him to the love of Philosophy, the most beautiful and most virtuous daughter of the Emperor of the Universe, and that she is the lady whom he addresses, in an anagogical sense, in this canzone.



### BOOK III.

#### EXPLICATION OF CANZONE II.

##### THE PRAISES OF PHILOSOPHY.

CHAP. I. He explains the argument of the second canzone, which is to praise, as far as lies in his power, the excellence and virtue of the lady who is the object of his

second love, namely Philosophy. He shows that his strong attachment proceeds from three motives ; first, to do honour to himself, through the merits of the object of his attachment ; next, to do honour to her from his labours in her service ; and lastly, to remove the imputation of seeming to have exchanged the love of Beatrice for that of another lady. He divides the canzone into three parts ; the first, from v. 1 to 18 ; the second, from v. 19 to 54 ; the third, from v. 55 to 72.

CHAP. II. He subdivides the first part into three ; and in this chapter explains the first subdivision, to v. 8, showing the sublimity of the argument he had chosen, and that the love of which he discourses is that of his soul for a noble lady, the image of divine light, so united to his soul that his thoughts are continually exercised in the endeavour to attain a perfect knowledge of this lady's worth. He discourses on love generally ; and on the vegetative, sensitive, and reasoning souls.

CHAP. III. He shows that as truth and virtue afford the noblest delights to the mind, his love is most worthily placed ; a love, which he is as desirous to be able to express with words as he feels himself inadequate to do so, from the ineffable virtues of the beauty of his beloved.

CHAP. IV. He then explains the causes of his insufficiency to express truly the ineffable merits of his lady, and continues the comment from v. 9 to 13, and from v. 14 to 18, which concludes Stanza I.

CHAP. V. He continues the comment from v. 19 to 36, and shows first that he had rightly said of the sun, (v. 19,) that it revolves round the world, meaning by world the terraqueous globe, and then discourses largely on the astronomical system of Aristotle.

CHAP. VI. He continues the comment from v. 19 to 36, (Stanza II.) and commends and displays the excellence of his lady both in respect of soul and body.

CHAP. VII. He explains from v. 37 to 54, (Stanza III.) and commends his lady, more especially respecting the beauty of the soul ; showing that the virtue proceeding from it is useful to the whole world ; since in her is exhibited a continual miracle, conceived in the mind of the Deity, and ordained from eternity for the strengthening of our faith. He then discourses on intelligence, human and divine.

CHAP. VIII. He explains from v. 55 to 72, (Stanza IV.) commending his lady in respect of the body, and showing that even in that particular she aids our faith, and furthers the divine intention in producing that effect. He dwells

particularly on the power of expression in the eyes and the mouth, and on the beauty of her silent smile.

CHAP. IX. He comments the conclusion, or *comiato* of the canzone, from v. 73 to 83, and excuses the canzone for a seeming contradiction in giving such praises to his lady, while in another composition he had described her as disdainful and proud. He then shows that some things even in nature are not what they appear, and discourses particularly on vision.

CHAP. X. He completes the literal explanation of the conclusion of the canzone from v. 84 to 90.

CHAP. XI. He then proceeds to show the allegorical sense of the canzone. The lady of his love, he says, is the lady who is the object of his intellectual study, and who is named Philosophy. He informs us who had given her that name, in what it truly consists, how noble is its end, and in what sciences it is most intimately occupied.

CHAP. XII. He proceeds with the praises of Philosophy, saying that his love means the study he employs to acquire her; shows how the corporeal and sensible Sun, of which he speaks in the canzone, is an image not unworthy of the Deity, the spiritual and incomprehensible Sun; and then makes known how peculiarly the Deity delights in Philosophy. This carries the allegorical comment from v. 1 to 22.

CHAP. XIII. He continues the comment from v. 23 to 36. He points out in what manner men may be made capable of attaining Philosophy, and how a great part of her blessings are granted to human nature.

CHAP. XIV. Having spoken the praises of Philosophy generally, he descends to particulars, and unveils the allegory from v. 37 to 54. Explains the meaning of *Donna gentile*, v. 39; shows how Philosophy operates upon human intelligences, and elevates them to the love and knowledge of things eternal, and to the acquisition of the three Christian virtues, Faith, Hope, and Charity.

CHAP. XV. He concludes the allegorical comment from v. 55 to the end; and explains how Philosophy generates in us true wisdom, the wisdom of Scripture, the only light which we can have to guide us in the brief journey of life.

## BOOK IV.

## EXPLICATION OF CANZONE III.

## ON TRUE NOBILITY.

CHAP. I. He premises that as a follower of Philosophy, he was an enemy to the followers of wilful error ; and that among the many errors which divert men from the right road, it seemed to him particularly desirable to remove one of them, a mistaken notion of nobility, which places it on a foundation entirely different from the love of virtue and wisdom. Of this he says, he is to treat in his third canzone, and that he has not made use of allegory in it, in order that his remedy for this common disease may take the speedier effect.

CHAP. II. He explains the introduction of the canzone, from v. 1 to 20, (Stanza I.,) and divides it into three parts. The invocation (v. 18,) is to Truth, the sovereign who dwells in the eyes of his lady Philosophy. The argument proposed is to show the truth, and expose the falsity respecting men's ideas of nobility ; but in order to excite a greater desire to hear him, he says he shall first expose and remove errors, that the truth may be more readily received.

CHAP. III. He divides the remainder of the canzone into three parts : First, from v. 21 to 80, (Stanza II. III. IV.) ; second, from v. 81 to 140, (Stanza V. VI. VII.) ; third, from v. 141 to 146, (Stanza VIII.) In the first, he speaks of nobility according to the false opinion of others ; in the second, according to the true opinion as taught by Philosophy ; in the third, he concludes the canzone. He makes further subdivisions, for which he apologises ; but says they are called for, his argument being a profound one, and which has been little investigated. From v. 21 to 24, is given the definition of nobility by an emperor, Frederick II. ; from v. 25 to 31, is shown the false opinion of it entertained by the people. This leads him to speak of the foundation of imperial authority, and of its great influence in strengthening these errors.

CHAP. IV. He shows that the empire of a universal monarchy is desirable for the peace of the world ; and proceeds to prove that the Roman Empire was constituted

for that end ; not by force but by divine will, to which Rome owed its rise and progress.

CHAP. V. Rome, he shows, was conceived and ordained by Providence to be the holy city, and the seat of a universal monarchy.

CHAP. VI. He considers the different qualities of imperial authority, and philosophical authority ; refers to the ancient philosophers, particularly Aristotle, and to Scripture ; and shows that the one is not repugnant to the other, but that, for the good of the people, it is necessary that the authority of the prince should be joined to that of the Philosopher.

CHAP. VII. He then exposes the old and false opinion of the vulgar, that he is noble, whose ancestor was noble, though the descendant be utterly worthless in himself. This completes the comment of the second stanza.

CHAP. VIII. He shows that in impugning the two erroneous opinions upon nobility, that of the vulgar and that of the emperor Frederick II., he does not fail in due respect, either to him or to Aristotle. First in regard to the philosopher.

CHAP. IX. Then in regard to the emperor.

CHAP. X. Having shown that he is at liberty to reprove the false opinions of others upon nobility, he proves the falsity of that of the emperor, who makes it dependent upon ancestry ; and then, in showing that riches can neither by time nor by abundance give a title to nobility, he exposes the falsity of that of the vulgar. Thus completing the comment from v. 41 to 55.

CHAP. XI. To show that riches have no necessary connexion with nobility, he asserts that they are defective as well in their acquisition, as in their increase, and in their possession. And first as regards their acquisition, that it is generally contrary to distributive justice.

CHAP. XII. Then with respect to their increase, it generates an insatiable desire of acquiring more. This carries the comment from v. 56 to 58. He next considers how such a desire is adverse to the love of science ; then to show how different is the nature of these two desires, he discourses on the instability and variety of men's desires in the search after happiness.

CHAP. XIII. He then proves that the desire of science leads to perfection, however much it may be increased ; whereas the desire of riches is increased to the detriment of perfection. He shows that their possession is hurtful, both as the cause of evil and the privation of good ; which develops the sentiment of v. 59 and 60.

CHAP. XIV. Having shown that riches do not constitute nobility, he proves that neither time nor ancestry are truly required for the possession of it, v. 61 to 68.

CHAP. XV. He overthrows the error, that a low-born man cannot be noble, v. 69 to 80.

CHAP. XVI. He proceeds to comment the second part of the canzone, from v. 81 to 140, and makes various divisions. He observes that it is first necessary to define what is meant by the word nobility.

CHAP. XVII. He explains the canzone from v. 81 to 88 ; and shows that the degree of human perfection required to constitute true nobility, is necessarily founded in the exercise of the moral virtues ; and that these alone lead to perfection and happiness in this life.

CHAP. XVIII. He continues the comment from v. 89 to 100 ; and proves, that as every virtue proceeds from a principle of perfection, nobility is that principle from which the virtues proceed as an effect from its cause. He supports his reasoning by an obscure philosophical proposition.

CHAP. XIX. He continues the comment from v. 101 to 108, and proves that where active virtue is, there is always nobility ; in like manner, as where there are stars, there is always heaven ; and as where heaven is there are not always stars, so he shows that where nobility is, there is not always active virtue. Modesty, for example, being a noble feeling, but not one of the moral virtues.

CHAP. XX. He continues the comment from v. 109 to 120, and affirms that nobility is the seed of happiness, placed by the Deity in a human mind rightly disposed to receive it ; and that to be noble, it is not sufficient to descend from a noble stock ; but that fruits must be borne to confer true nobility, which fruits are the moral virtues.

CHAP. XXI. He undertakes to show how the principle of nobility descends into our souls by celestial influence, explains the opinions of Plato, Aristotle, and others on the nature of the soul, shows that in a natural way the human soul may obtain a state of such perfect generation, as to be enabled to show itself divine in its operations, even in the midst of the impediments of the body ; and by theological reasoning shows, that the Deity may grant to the human soul all the gifts which are ascribed to the Holy Ghost, because the granting them is the work of divine love alone.

CHAP. XXII. He proceeds to prove how by this principle

of nobility, it is granted to man to reach the end of the happiness for which he is destined ; and how this happiness, which is imperfect in the active life, and nearly perfect in the contemplative life, may become perfect in the highest degree in a future life, through the vision of the Deity. He explains allegorically the visit of the three Marys to the tomb of the Saviour. (Mark xvi.)

CHAP. XXIII. Having explained the idea of true nobility, the seed of virtue given by the Deity to conduct man to eternal happiness, he proceeds with the comment from v. 121 to 140 (Stanza VII.) ; and shows that the man who is noble, gives manifest signs of his nature in every age of life, the course of which he compares to an arch, v. 121 to 124.

CHAP. XXIV. He continues his argument in general upon the division and duration of the four ages of life ; and comments particularly on v. 125 to 128 ; and having asserted that to each age the exercise of peculiar virtues is becoming, he proceeds to treat of those which are suitable to Adolescence, which he makes to terminate at the age of twenty-five ; and first dilates on the virtue of obedience.

CHAP. XXV. He then treats of gentleness, of the sense of shame, and of horror of a bad action, of modesty in thought and act, thence of the improvement of the person, that is, of the beauty and the agility of the body.

CHAP. XXVI. He comments v. 129 to 131, and shows that temperance, strength, love, courtesy, and loyalty are becoming to the age of youth ; the period of from twenty-five years to forty-five.

CHAP. XXVII. He comments v. 132 to 135, and shows that prudence, justice, bounty, and affability are the virtues peculiarly becoming to Old Age, the period from forty-five to seventy years.

CHAP. XXVIII. He comments from v. 136 to 139. Passing to the period beyond three-score and ten, the fourth and last age of human existence, he shows that its duties are, to prepare itself for a return to the Deity, to feel contentment for the life that has been past, and to bless it, as a journey which must be performed, or the joys of heaven cannot be attained.

CHAP. XXIX. He comes to the last verse, (v. 140,) of the seventh stanza, and presuming that the mistake must be evident of those who believe men to be noble, because they spring from ancient and famous families, he observes further, that the great actions of ancestors are of no avail in covering the base actions of descendants ; that a progeny



suffices not to perpetuate nobility, since the good who have flourished in virtue cannot prevent the birth of the wicked, who may change both the condition of the family and the name.

CHAP. XXX. He terminates the comment, and the Convito, with an explanation of the concluding address to the canzone, v. 141 to 146 ; in which he recommends the instructions which it contains to all those whose minds are the dwelling-place of Philosophy.\*

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\* V. Appendice al Convito, da Scolari. Padova 1838. Argomenti delli Trattati e delli Capitoli del Convito. P. 27 et seq.

CONVITO. BOOK IV. CHAP. XXIV.

TABLE OF DANTE'S FIVE AGES OF MAN, AND OF THE DUTY PARTICULARLY CALLED FOR IN EACH.

YEARS.		PERIOD OF LIFE.	PECULIAR DUTY OF EACH PERIOD.
From	To		
1	10†	Childhood	To acquire life.
10	25	Adolescence	To confirm it.
25	35	} Youth	{ To employ it well. To attain its summit.
	45		
		Summit of the arch of life	To perfect it.
45	70	Old age	{ To direct it to its ultimate end, <i>i. e.</i> to GOD.
70	80	Extreme old age	To end it in peace.

" Il vivere dell' uomo è ragione usare." (Convito, B. iv. c. 7.)

Uomini, studiate Dante, studiatelo bene :

e in questa breve e misera vita sarete meno infelici.

Egli vi scorge a Dio.

SCOLARI.



THE  
LYRICAL POEMS OF DANTE.

---

POEMS OF THE VITA NUOVA.

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SONNET I.

*A ciascun' alma presa e gentil core.*

To every captive soul and gentle heart,  
Into whose sight the present song shall come,  
Praying their thoughts on what it may portend,  
Health in the name of Love, their sovereign lord.  
A third part of the hours had almost past  
Which show in brightest lustre every star,  
When suddenly before me Love appeared,  
Whose essence to remember gives me horror.  
Joyful Love seem'd, holding within his hand  
My heart, and in his arms enfolded lay  
Madonna sleeping, in a mantle wrapt.  
Then waking her, he with this burning heart  
Courteously fed her, and in fear she ate.  
That done, I saw him go his way in tears.

## SONNET.

REPLY OF GUIDO CAVALCANTI.

Vedesti, al mio parere, ogni valora.

THOU hast beheld all power, meseems, and worth,  
 All joy and every good that man can know,  
 If thou hast proved the virtue of that lord  
 Who sovereign o'er the world of honour rules ;  
 For he delights to live where troubles die,  
 And with a mind compassionate is just ;  
 So softly o'er the fancy steals in sleep,  
 That hearts he bears away without a pang.  
 Your heart he bore away, for he perceived  
 That to your lady Death was laying claim ;  
 And fearing this, sustained her with that heart.  
 When he appeared to go his way in grief,  
 Sweet was the dream, for then it fully told  
 That sorrow's opposite was conquering.

## BALLATA I.

O voi che per la via d'Amor passate.

O YE who wander in the path of Love,  
 Attend to me and see,  
 If there be any sorrow great as mine ;  
 I pray you but to hear me patiently,  
 And then think whether I  
 Of every torment am the abode and key.  
 Love, not through merit of my slender worth,  
 But through his nobleness,  
 Had placed me in a life so calm and sweet,  
 That oft I heard behind me voices say,  
 Tell me the mighty worth  
 Entitles this man to a heart so light.  
 Now have I wholly lost the spirit bold  
 That from the fountain of Love's treasure flow'd,  
 Whence I am left so poor,  
 I tremble to give utterance to thought :  
 So that, endeavouring to do like those  
 Who strive to hide their penury through shame,  
 I wear a face of joy,  
 And inwardly at heart I pine and mourn.

## SONNET II.

*Piangete amanti, poichè piange Amore.*

YE lovers weep, for Love himself doth weep,  
 When you shall hear the cause whence flow his  
     tears ;  
 Love feels the piteous claim of ladies' moan,  
 Whose eyes declare the bitterness of grief ;  
 For the rude hand of Death has done a deed  
     Of cruelty upon a gentle heart ;  
 Destroying all that merits the world's praise  
 In gentle lady, save her honoured fame.  
 Hear now what honour she received from Love ;  
 I saw him in his very person mourn  
     O'er the dead image of her loveliness ;  
 And oft he cast a wistful look to heaven,  
     Where then the gentle spirit was at rest,  
 That lady was of countenance so gay.



## BALLATA II.

*Morte villana, di pietà nemica.*

DISCOURTEOUS Death ! compassion's enemy,  
 Of grief the parent old,  
 O judgment, irresistible, severe,  
 Since thou hast given a theme to this sad heart  
 On which my thoughts still dwell,  
 The tongue is wearied in upbraiding thee.  
 And if to prayer thou wilt refuse all grace,  
 'T is just that I denounce  
 Thy cruelty, of wrongful deeds most wrong ;  
 Not that it can be hidden from the world,  
 But I would stir the wrath  
 Of all whose nourishment henceforth is love.  
 From this world thou hast driven fair courtesy,  
 And virtue most in lady to be prized ;  
 In gaiety of youth  
 Thou hast destroyed the gracefulness of love.  
 More of this lady I will not disclose  
 Than by her attributes may here be known :  
 He who deserves not heaven,  
 May never hope to have her company

## SONNET III.

*Cavalcando l' altr' ier per un camino.*

RIDING the other day along a road,  
 And on my irksome journey pondering,  
 I chanced to meet with Love upon the way,  
 Clad in a pilgrim's light and humble garb.  
 In look he seemed dejected and forlorn,  
 As if his mighty sovereignty were lost ;  
 And sighing, was advancing pensively,  
 With head declined, to avoid the sight of man.  
 When seen of him, he called to me by name,  
 And said, I come from a far distant land,  
 Where, by my will, thy heart had been disposed,  
 And bring it here for service sweet and new.  
 Then was I so enamour'd of his will,  
 That he had vanished, and I knew not how.



## BALLATA III.

*Ballata, io vuo' che tu ritrovi Amore.*

My song, it is my wish thou find out Love,  
 And to Madonna's presence go with him,  
 So that my sovereign in discourse with her  
 May offer my excuse, which thou shalt sing.  
 Thy bearing is so courteous, my song,  
 That unaccompanied  
 Thy spirit might be bold in every place ;  
 But wouldst thou go in full security,  
 First thou must find out Love,  
 For without him to go might not be well ;  
 Since she who ought to give thee audience,  
 If, as it seems, I have much angered her,  
 And thou wert not accompanied by him,  
 Might hastily perhaps dishonour thee.  
 In sound melodious, when thou art with him,  
 Begin the following strain,  
 After a prayer to be with pity heard :  
 "Madonna, he whose messenger I am,  
 When you shall please, entreats

That you will hear if he may be excused.  
 Love standeth here, who by your beauty's power  
 Makes him to change his countenance at will ;  
 Reflect then, why he made him seem to court  
 Another, for his heart hath never changed."  
 And say, "Madonna, yours his heart hath been  
 With such confirmed faith,  
 That every thought is bent on serving you ;  
 Yours was he early, nor hath ever swerved."  
 If she believe thee not,  
 Tell her to question Love, who knows the truth.  
 Lastly, prefer to her a humble prayer,  
 To pardon, if offence he may have given :  
 Let her by message order me to die,  
 And she shall see her servant will obey.  
 And say to him who is compassion's key,  
 Before thou leave the lady,  
 For he shall prove to her my loyalty :  
 "In virtue of my sweet and suppliant lay,  
 Remain thou here with her,  
 And for thy servant, plead as he desires :  
 And if she grant him pardon through thy prayer,  
 Make her announce his peace in beauty's smile."  
 My gentle song, go when it pleaseth thee,  
 And in such time that it shall bring thee honour.

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 SONNET IV.

Tutti li miei penser parlan d'Amore.

My thoughts are all discoursing upon Love,  
 And have in them so great variety,  
 That one persuades me to desire his sway,  
 Another says his power is vanity :  
 One sweetly soothes and cheers me while I hope,  
 Another oftentimes makes my tears to flow,  
 And they alone accord in pity's claim,  
 Trembling with fear which is within the heart.  
 Hence know I not what argument to take,  
 And fain would speak, and know not what to say ;  
 Thus do I wander in Love's labyrinth.  
 And if with all I would accordance make,  
 I needs must call upon my enemy,  
 Madonna Pity, to be my defence.



## SONNET V.

*Con l' altre donne mia vista gabbate.*

WITH other ladies you deride my looks,  
 And you reflect not, lady, whence it comes  
 That I appear to you a sight so strange  
 And alter'd when your beauty I regard.  
 If you but knew it, Pity would relent,  
 Nor with the wonted trial vex me more ;  
 For when Love finds me near you, he assumes  
 Such boldness, and so great security,  
 That my poor timid spirits he assails,  
 And some he deadly wounds, some drives away,  
 Till he alone remains to gaze on you.  
 Hence to another's semblance I am changed ;  
 But not so changed that still I do not feel  
 The anguish of the exiled sufferers.

## SONNET VI.

*Ciò che m' incontra nella mente more.*

ALL thoughts that meet within my mind expire,  
 Fair jewel, when I come to gaze on you ;  
 And when I am near you, I hear Love exclaim,  
 O flee, if thy destruction thou wouldst shun.  
 The countenance the heart's complexion wears,  
 Which fainting seeks support where'er it can ;  
 And through the intoxication of great fear,  
 The very stones, methinks, cry out, Die, die !  
 He sins who can behold me then unmoved,  
 Nor comfort gives to the affrighted soul,  
 At least in showing that he pities me  
 For the distress occasioned by your scorn,  
 Which is apparent in the deadly hue  
 Of these sad eyes that fain would close in death.

## SONNET VII.

*Spesse fiate venemi alla mente.*

MANY the times that to my memory comes  
 The cheerless state imposed on me by Love ;  
 And o'er me comes such sadness then, that oft  
 I say, alas, was ever fate like mine !  
 For Love assaulteth me so suddenly  
 That life itself almost abandons me :  
 One spirit alone escapes alive, and that  
 Is left, fair lady, for it speaks of you.  
 At length I make an effort for relief,  
 And so, all pale and destitute of power,  
 I come to gaze on you, in hope of cure :  
 And if I raise the eyes that I may look,  
 A trembling at my heart begins, so dread,  
 It makes the soul take flight from every vein.

## CANZONE I.

*Donne che avete intelletto d'amore.*

LADIES who have intelligence of love,  
 With you of my loved lady I would speak ;  
 Not vainly thinking to exhaust her praise,  
 But in discoursing to relieve my mind.  
 I say that, in reflecting on her worth,  
 Love's inspiration is so sweetly felt,  
 That, if my courage did not fail me then,  
 The world should be enamour'd by my words.  
 And from a flight so lofty I abstain,  
 Lest I become contemptible through fear ;  
 But of her gentle nature I will treat,  
 In lowly strain compared with her desert,  
 Ladies and damsels rich in love, with you ;  
 For 'tis a theme unmeet for other ear.  
 An angel to the intelligence divine  
 Appeals, and says : Sire, in the world is seen  
 A miracle in action, which proceeds  
 From a fair soul whose splendour mounts thus high  
 Heaven, that no want had ever known but her,  
 Entreats to have her presence of its lord,  
 And every saint aloud implores the grace.  
 Pity alone opposes our request.  
 What is Madonna's doom ? What God's decree ?

My well-beloved, suffer now in peace  
 That, while my pleasure is, your hope should stay  
 Where there is one who must abide her loss,  
 And who shall say to the condemn'd in hell,  
 The hope of blessed spirits I have seen.  
 Madonna is in highest heaven desired :  
 Now will I tell you of her excellence.  
 I say then, that the lady who would show  
 True gentleness should walk with her ; for when  
 She moves, Love casts o'er vulgar hearts a chill,  
 Which freezes and destroys their every thought :  
 And he whom Love permits to see her long,  
 A thing ennobled should become, or die ;  
 And when he finds one who may worthy be  
 To look on her, her influence is proved ;  
 For he receives the gift, conferring health,  
 And the meek spirit which forgets all wrongs.  
 Still hath God given her this higher grace,  
 That who with her converses heaven secures.  
 Love says of her, can there be mortal thing  
 At once adorn'd so richly and so pure ?  
 Then looks on her, and silently affirms  
 That Heaven designs in her a creature new.  
 A hue of pearl invests her countenance,  
 Suiting a lady, pale but not extreme.  
 All choicest gifts in nature's power are her's :  
 In her example beauty finds its test ;  
 Where'er she turns her eyes, from them go forth  
 Spirits of love, which, full of gentle flame,  
 Strike on the eyes of those beholding her,  
 And thus each finds a passage to the heart.  
 You see Love pictured in her countenance,  
 Where none has power to look with fix'd regard.  
 My song, I know that thou wilt converse hold  
 With many a lady when sent forth by me :  
 Now I admonish, having brought thee up  
 For one, young, modest, and the child of Love,  
 That where thou com'st thou shalt entreating say,  
 Teach me my course, for I am sent to her,  
 Whose praise doth constitute my ornament.  
 And if thou wouldst not have thy journey vain,  
 Remain not where ungente minds are found :  
 Endeavour, if thou canst, to be reveal'd  
 Only to lady or to courteous man,  
 Who soon will speed thee to thy journey's end.  
 Love thou wilt find in company with her ;  
 Commend me to them, as becometh thee.

## SONNET VIII.

*Amore e 'l cor gentil sono una cosa.*

Love and the gentle heart are but one thing,  
 As says the wise man in his apophthegm ;  
 And one can by itself no more exist  
 Than reason can without the reasoning soul.  
 Nature when full of love creates the two ;  
 Love for a king, the heart for his abode,  
 Within which palace sleeping, his repose  
 At times is brief, at others lasteth long.  
 Beauty appears in virtuous lady then,  
 Which so delights the eye, that in the heart  
 Desire is born to win the pleasing thing ;  
 And there maintains itself at times so long,  
 That it compels the spirit of Love to wake :  
 And manly worth in lady doth the same.

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## SONNET IX.

*Negli occhi porta la mia donna Amore.*

WITHIN her eyes my lady carries Love,  
 Whence is ennobled all that she regards :  
 Where'er she moves, towards her do all men turn,  
 And the heart throbs of him whom she salutes ;  
 So that with countenance cast down and pale  
 He then, remembering all his failings, sighs.  
 Anger and pride before her presence fly :  
 O ladies, lend me aid to do her honour.  
 All sweetness, every humble thought is born  
 Within the heart of him who hears her speak :  
 Then blest is he who first hath look'd on her.  
 What she appears when she a little smiles,  
 Tongue cannot tell nor memory retain,  
 So new and lovely is the miracle.

## SONNET X.

*Voi che portate la sembianza umile.*

YE who a countenance so lowly wear,  
 Showing with downcast eyes an inward grief,  
 Whence do ye come, that your complexion's hue  
 Seems changed into a likeness of the tomb?  
 Our gentle lady have you left, and seen  
 Her face bedew'd with tears of sorrowing love?  
 O tell me, ladies, for so says my heart,  
 When your ennobled bearing I regard.  
 And if from such affliction ye do come,  
 O stay in kindness here with me awhile,  
 And whatsoe'er her state conceal it not.  
 For by your eyes I see that they have wept,  
 And see you come with features so disturb'd,  
 That my heart trembles at such signs of woe.

## SONNET XI.

*Se' tu colui ch'hai trattato sovente.*

ART thou the man who of our lady hast  
 So often sung, addressing us alone?  
 In voice thou dost indeed resemble him,  
 But in thy looks thou seem'st of other race.  
 And wherefore weepest thou so feelingly,  
 That others thou dost make to pity thee?  
 Hast thou too seen her weep, and hast not power  
 The anguish of thy bosom to conceal?  
 Leave us to weep, and go our mournful way;  
 He sins who doth attempt to comfort us,  
 For we have heard her speak amidst her tears.  
 Such woe is in her countenance express'd,  
 That who should have the heart to look on it,  
 Would in her presence through his sorrow die.

## CANZONE II.

*Donna pietosa e di novella etate.*

A LADY, piteous and of tender age,  
 Richly adorn'd with human gentleness,  
 Stood where I oft was calling upon death ;  
 And seeing that my eyes were full of grief,  
 And listening to the folly of my words,  
 Was moved by fear to weep with bitterness.  
 And other ladies, who were kindly drawn  
 To notice me, through her who wept with me,  
 Removed her from my side,  
 And then approach'd, to rouse me by their voice.  
 And one said, sleep no more !  
 Another said, why thus discomfort thee ?  
 Then fled the strange distressing fantasy,  
 As I was calling on my lady's name.  
 So indistinct and mournful was my voice,  
 And broken so by anguish and by tears,  
 That in my heart I only heard the name :  
 And with a countenance o'erspread with shame,  
 So strongly it had mounted to my face,  
 Love made me turn to them distractedly ;  
 And such was my complexion to the sight,  
 That it led others to discourse of death.  
 Oh let us comfort him,  
 Said each one to the other tenderly.  
 And oft they said to me,  
 What hast thou seen, that has unmann'd thee thus ?  
 And when I had regain'd some strength, I said,  
 Ladies, to you I will relate the whole.  
 Whilst I lay pondering on my ebbing life,  
 And saw how brief its tenure and how frail,  
 Love wept within my heart, where he abides ;  
 For my unhappy soul was wandering so,  
 That sighing heavily, it said, in thought,  
 My lady too most certainly shall die.  
 Such consternation then my reason seized,  
 That my eyes closed through fear and heaviness ;  
 And scatter'd far and wide  
 My spirits fled, and each in error stray'd.  
 Imagination then,  
 Bereft of understanding and of truth,

Show'd me the forms of ladies in distress,  
 Who said to me, thou die'st, ay, thou shalt die.  
 Many the doubtful things which next I saw,  
 While wandering in imagination's maze ;  
 I seem'd to be I know not in what place,  
 And to see ladies pass with hair all loose,  
 Some weeping, and some uttering loud laments,  
 Which darted burning grief into the soul.  
 And then methought I saw a thickening veil  
 Obscure the sun, and night's fair star appear,  
 And sun and star both weep ;  
 Birds flying through the dusky air drop down,  
 And earth itself to shake ;  
 And then appear'd a man, feeble and pale,  
 Saying, what dost thou here ! hast thou not heard ?  
 Dead is thy lady, she who was so fair.  
 I raised mine eyes, oppress'd and bathed in tears,  
 And saw what like a shower of manna seem'd,  
 The angels re-ascending up to heaven ;  
 And spread before them was a little cloud,  
 Behind which they were chanting loud, Hosanna.  
 And if they more had added, you should hear.  
 Then Love thus spoke : concealment here shall end ;  
 Come now and see our lady on her bier.  
 Deceitful fancy then  
 Conducted me to see my lady dead :  
 And while I gazed, I saw  
 That ladies with a veil were covering her ;  
 And in her face humility so true  
 There was, it seem'd to say, I am in peace.  
 So humble in my sorrow I became,  
 Seeing such humbleness in her express'd,  
 That I exclaim'd, O Death, I hold thee sweet ;  
 Thou must be deem'd henceforth a gentle thing,  
 Since thou hast been united to my lady,  
 And pity thou shouldst have, and not disdain :  
 Behold me so desirous to be one  
 Of thine, that I resemble thee in faith :  
 Come, for the heart entreats thee.  
 Then, all sad rites being o'er, I went my way ;  
 And when I was alone,  
 I said, with eyes upraised to realms above ;  
 Blessed is he who sees thee, beauteous soul !  
 'Twas then you call'd to me, thanks to your love.

## SONNET XII.

*Io mi sentii svegliar dentro a lo core.*

I FELT awaken in my inmost heart  
 A loving spirit that was sleeping there,  
 And then saw Love, approaching from afar,  
 His air so joyous that I scarcely knew him,  
 Saying, now think for once to do me honour;  
 And every word of his spoke laughingly;  
 And soon, while yet my sovereign staid with me,  
 In looking toward the quarter whence he came,  
 I saw Giovanna and fair Beatrice,  
 Coming, not far apart, to where I was,  
 The one fair miracle behind the other.  
 And thus, as memory recalls the words,  
 Love said to me, this lady's name is Spring,  
 And that—is Love, she so resembles me.



## SONNET XIII.

*Tanto gentile, e tanto onesta pare.*

So noble and so modest doth appear  
 My lady when she any one salutes,  
 That every tongue becomes in trembling mute,  
 And none dare raise the eyes to look on her.  
 Robed in humility she hears her praise,  
 And passes on with calm benignity;  
 Appearing not a thing of earth, but come  
 From heaven, to show mankind a miracle.  
 So pleasing is the sight of her, that he  
 Who gazes feels a sweetness reach the heart  
 That must be proved or cannot be conceived.  
 And from her countenance there seems to flow  
 A spirit full of mildness and of love,  
 Which says for ever to the soul, O sigh.



## SONNET XIV.

Vede perfettamente ogni salute.

He the perfection sees of every grace,  
 Who doth my lady among ladies see ;  
 They who partake her company are bound  
 To render thanks to heaven for boon so fair.  
 Her beauty too has virtue so benign,  
 That it excites no envy in another,  
 But a resolve to walk like her, array'd  
 In gentleness, fidelity, and love.  
 Her look on all things sheds humility,  
 And makes not her alone delight the eye,  
 But every thing through her receiveth honour.  
 And she so perfect is in all her acts,  
 That no one can recall her to the mind  
 Who doth not sigh amid the sweets of Love.

## SONNET XV.

Sì lungamente m' ha tenuto Amore.

So long has Love retain'd me in his power,  
 And so accustom'd to his sovereignty,  
 That, hard as was his rule to me at first,  
 He now is softly seated in my heart.  
 Hence when he robs me of all energy,  
 So that the spirits seem forsaking me,  
 Then the frail fainting soul such sweetness feels  
 That in the face all colour dies away.  
 Love then has over me such mastery,  
 That he compels my sighs to flow and speak ;  
 And they go forth entreating  
 My lady to bestow more grace on me.  
 This is my state whene'er she looks on me,  
 And she so humble is, 'tis not believed.

## CANZONE III.

Gli occhi dolenti per pietà del core.

THE eyes which mourn in pity for the heart,  
 Such suffering have endured from many tears,  
 That they at length are perfectly subdued ;  
 And now if I would give my woe relief,  
 Which step by step is leading me to death,  
 I needs must tell my sorrow in my moans ;  
 And as I well remember that I spoke  
 Concerning her, my lady, while she lived,  
 Ye gentle ladies, willingly with you,  
 Now will I speak to none  
 Save to the gentle heart in lady's breast.  
 And weeping, then, my song shall be of her  
 Who is to heaven departed suddenly,  
 And has left Love companion of my grief.  
 To highest heaven Beatrice is gone,  
 Into the realm where angels dwell in peace,  
 And rests with them ; and, ladies, you she hath left  
 No quality of cold, nor yet of heat,  
 Robb'd us of her, as it of others does ;  
 But her supreme benignity alone ;  
 For the bright beam of her humility  
 Pass'd with such virtue the celestial spheres,  
 That it raised wonder in the eternal Sire :  
 So that his pleasure was  
 To call away a soul so full of grace,  
 And make it from our earth ascend to him,  
 Deeming this life of weariness and care  
 Unworthy of a thing so excellent.  
 Forth from her beauteous frame the soul is fled,  
 Replete with perfect gentleness and grace,  
 And is made glorious in a worthy place.  
 He who can speak of her without a tear,  
 Must have a heart of stone, perverse and vile,  
 Where kindly spirit can no entrance find.  
 The ignoble heart is fraught with sense too low  
 To form the faintest image of her worth,  
 And hence to such comes no desire to weep.  
 But grief and sadness come,

And sighs and deadly sorrow, and the soul  
Of every consolation is bereft,  
To him who but in thought has once beheld  
How good she was, and how from us is taken.  
Great is the anguish which my sighs inflict,  
When to the burden'd mind remembrance brings  
The thought of her who has my heart divided.  
And often when I ruminate on death,  
There comes to me so sweet a wish to die,  
That in my face it makes the colour change.  
And when imagination holds me fast,  
Pain so excessive seizes all my frame,  
That I am roused through very agony ;  
And such a spectacle  
Become, that shame disparts me from mankind.  
Then lonely, weeping, I lament and call  
On Beatrice, and say, Art thou then dead !  
And while I call on her am comforted.  
The sighs of anguish and the tears of grief  
So wring the heart, whene'er I am alone,  
That who should hear me must compassion feel.  
And what my life hath been, e'er since the day  
That to the world unknown my lady went,  
Tongue there is not that hath the power to tell.  
And therefore, ladies, even though I would,  
I could not truly tell you what I am,  
So am I harass'd by my bitter life,  
Which is become so vile,  
That all men seem to say, I own thee not,  
Seeing my countenance show signs of death.  
But what I truly am my lady sees,  
And still from her I hope for my reward.  
My piteous Song, now weeping go thy way,  
And for the ladies and the damsels seek,  
To whom thy sisters blithe  
Were wont to bear the happy notes of joy ;  
And thou, who art the daughter of my sorrow,  
Depart disconsolate to dwell with them.

## SONNET XVI.

*Venite a intender li sospiri miei.*

O COME, ye gentle hearts, for pity calls,  
 And listen with compassion to my sighs,  
 Which go their way from me disconsolate,  
 And if they did not, I of grief should die.  
 For many a time the eyes would be perverse,  
 Much more than I could wish, nor give relief,  
 Alas! in weeping for my lady so,  
 That by my tears I might assuage the heart.  
 Oft will you hear them call upon the name  
 Of her, my gentle lady, who is gone  
 Unto a world deserving of her worth;  
 And sometimes hear this life despised by them  
 In person of the deep-afflicted soul  
 Abandon'd by the fountain of her health.



## BALLATA IV.

*Quantunque volte, lasso! mi rimembra.*

ALAS! whenever memory recalls  
 That I may never more  
 Behold the lady whom I so lament,  
 The afflicted mind collects around my heart  
 Such overwhelming grief,  
 That I exclaim, My soul, why longer stay?  
 For all the torments which thou shalt endure  
 In this sad world, to thee so painful grown,  
 Fill me with thought and fear of ills to come.  
 Wherefore I call for death,  
 As for a sweet and tranquil state of rest,  
 And say, O come to me! with love so true,  
 That I am envious of whoever dies.  
 Confused amid the tumult of my sighs  
 A piteous sound is heard,  
 Which supplicates for death unceasingly;  
 To him were all my ardent wishes turn'd,

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That instant when my lady  
 Was overtaken by his cruelty.  
 For when the beauty of her pleasing form,  
 Withdrawing from our view, was lost to us,  
 It changed to beauty, spiritual and great,  
 Which through the heaven spreads  
 A light of love, that greets the angelic choir,  
 And in their deep and subtle intellect  
 Causes astonishment, it is so fair.



## SONNET XVII.

*Era venuta ne la mente mia.*

REMEMBRANCE had brought back into my mind  
 The gentle lady, who for worthiness  
 Was raised to glory by the Lord most high,  
 Where in the heaven of meekness Mary dwells.



REMEMBRANCE had brought back into my mind  
 That gentle lady for whom Love doth weep,  
 At the same instant that his influence  
 Drew your regard to what engaged me.  
 Love, who perceived her presence in the mind,  
 Had waked from slumber in my wretched heart,  
 And calling to the sighs, exclaim'd, Go forth!  
 They heard, and each departed mournfully.  
 Weeping they issued from my breast, with voice  
 Of grief, which often brings to the sad eyes  
 The bitter tears of my unhappiness.  
 But those which issued forth with greater pain  
 Went saying, Noble intellect, this day  
 Completes the year since thy ascent to heaven.

## SONNET XVIII.

Videro gli occhi miei quanta pietate.

THESE eyes have seen how great the pity was  
 That overspread your features, when you mark'd  
 The actions and condition which through grief  
 My wretched person many times display'd.  
 I then perceived that you were pondering  
 Upon the nature of my gloomy life,  
 So that a fear within my heart arose  
 Of showing with the eyes my abjectness ;  
 And from your presence I withdrew, for tears,  
 I felt, were set in motion by the heart,  
 Which was affected by the sight of you.  
 I afterward, within the mournful soul,  
 Said, surely with that lady must abide  
 The love which makes me go thus sorrowing.

## SONNET XIX.

Color d'amore e di pietà sembianti.

NEVER did pity's semblance and love's hue  
 Take such admired possession of the face  
 Of lady, from her having oft observed  
 The gentle eyes and tears that told of grief,  
 As it doth take of yours, when you regard  
 My mournful aspect which before you stands :  
 So that through you my mind recalls a thing,  
 Which makes me greatly fear the heart will break.  
 I struggle to prevent the wasted eyes  
 From gazing on you often, but in vain ;  
 So strong is the desire they have to weep :  
 And you have given such increase to their will,  
 That by their wishing they are quite consumed,  
 But cannot in your presence shed a tear.

## SONNET XX.

*L' amaro lagrimar che voi faceste.*

THE many bitter tears that you have shed,  
 Mine eyes, during long seasons past, drew down  
 Tears of commiseration from the eyes  
 Of other persons, as you did observe.  
 Now it appears you would forget the past,  
 If I on my part were so criminal  
 That I disturb'd you not continually,  
 Reminding you of her for whom you wept.  
 Your vanity disquieteth my thoughts,  
 And so alarms me, that I greatly fear  
 A lady's countenance who looks on you.  
 You never more, unless through death, should be  
 Forgetful of your lady who is dead.  
 So says my anxious heart, and then it sighs.

## SONNET XXI.

*Gentil pensiero che parla di vui.*

LADY, the gentle thought which speaks of you  
 Comes frequently to bear me company,  
 And then so sweetly reasons upon Love,  
 It makes the heart consent to all it says.  
 The soul says to the heart, O who is this  
 That comes with consolation to our mind,  
 And is so strong in virtue he permits  
 No other thought beside with us to stay ?  
 The heart replies to her, O thoughtful soul,  
 This is a new and gentle spirit of Love,  
 Who brings and lays before me his desires ;  
 And all his power, and his very life,  
 Hath sprung from pity in that lady's eyes  
 Who was distress'd to see our sufferings.

## SONNET XXII.

Lasso ! per forza di molti sospiri.

ALAS ! through violence of many sighs,  
Which spring from thoughts that lie within the heart,  
The eyes are conquer'd, and have not the power  
To look again on one who looks on them.  
And such they are, they seem but two desires,  
Of shedding tears and manifesting grief ;  
And many times they weep so bitterly  
That with a torturing crown Love circles them.  
These thoughts, and the tumultuous sighs I heave,  
Become such cruel torments in the heart,  
That Love lamenting o'er them faints away.  
For they, the widow'd mourners, bear inscribed  
That sweet name of Madonna, and record  
Her death in many melancholy words.

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## SONNET XXIII.

Deh peregrini, che pensosi andate.

SAY, pilgrims, ye who go thus pensively,  
Musing perchance on things that distant are,  
Come ye from land and men so far away,  
As by your outward mien ye show to us,  
That ye weep not when passing through the midst  
Of the dejected city, in her woe,  
Seeming as persons who have never heard  
Of the calamity oppressing her ?  
If ye remain and have the will to hear,  
This heart of sighs assures me ye will then  
Share in our grief and weep when ye depart.  
The desolate city mourns her Beatrice,  
And in the tale that may be told of her  
Is virtue to force every one to weep.



## SONNET XXIV.

*Oltre la spera che più larga gira.*

BEYOND the circling sphere of widest range  
Passes the sigh which issues from my heart ;  
Thither updrawn by intellectual power  
Unknown before, which weeping Love inspires.  
When it hath reach'd the bourn of its desire,  
A lady it beholds receiving honour,  
And shining so, that through her splendid light  
The pilgrim spirit gazes and admires.  
It sees her such, that when 't is told to me  
I understand it not, so subtle are  
The answers to the heart that makes it speak.  
I know it speaketh of that gentle one,  
For Beatrice it often brings to mind ;  
So far, dear ladies, well I understand.

## POEMS OF THE CONVITO.

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### CANZONE I.

*Voi che, intendendo, il terzo ciel movete.*

YE who by intellect the third heaven move,  
Give ear unto the reasoning in my heart,  
Which none but you may hear, so strange it seems :  
The heaven that obeys your influence,  
Creatures who are all gentleness and love,  
Hath drawn me to the state in which I am ;  
Hence the discourse upon the life I prove,  
It seems, should meetly be address'd to you ;  
Therefore I pray you to attend to me.  
I will unfold to you the heart's new cares,  
How the dejected soul within it weeps ;  
And how a spirit against her reasoneth,  
Which on the beams of your fair star descends.

The joyless heart was wont to be sustain'd  
In life by a sweet thought, which often bent  
Its flight unto the footstool of your Sire ;  
Where it beheld a lady glorified,  
Of whom so sweetly it discoursed to me,  
That the soul said, would I could follow her !  
Now appears one which drives the thought away,  
And rules me with such power, that it makes  
The heart to tremble so as to be seen.  
A lady this one makes me to regard,  
And says, he who would see the bliss of heaven,  
Let him intently view this lady's eyes,  
Unless the painfulness of sighs he dread.

This rival spirit opposes and destroys  
The humble thought, accustom'd to discourse  
Of a bright angel who in heaven is crown'd.  
The soul so mourns her loss that still she weeps,  
And says, ah woe is me ! how flees away  
The pitying thought that was my comforter !  
Again, the troubled soul says of mine eyes,  
What was the hour this lady look'd on them ?  
And why believed they not my words of her ?  
I said, full surely in that lady's eyes  
Must dwell the power that such as me destroys ;  
And it avail'd me not that I foresaw  
They should not gaze on her, whence I am dead.

Thou art not dead, but in delusion strayest,  
Poor soul, who so lamentest thy estate,  
Exclaims a little gentle spirit of love ;  
For this fair lady, who disquiets thee,  
Has so transform'd thy life, that thou hast fear  
Of her, so spiritless thou art become.  
Behold how piteous and how meek she is,  
How courteous in her greatness and how sage ;  
And think to call her mistress evermore :  
For thou shalt see, if not by self deceived,  
The beauty of such lofty miracles,  
That thou wilt say, O Love, my sovereign true,  
Behold thy handmaid ; do as pleaseth thee.

My Song, I do believe that there are few  
Who will thy reasoning rightly understand,  
To them so hard and dark is thy discourse.  
Hence peradventure, if it come to pass  
That thou shouldst find thyself with persons who  
Appear unskill'd to comprehend thee well,  
I pray thee then, my young and well beloved,  
Be not discomfited, but say to them,  
Take note at least how beautiful I am.

## CANZONE II.

*Amor, che nella mente mi ragiona.*

Love, who discourses to me in my mind  
 With never-ceasing pleasure of my lady,  
 Often says things to me concerning her  
 On which the intellect reflects till lost.  
 The music of his words so sweetly sounds,  
 That the attentive soul, which hears and feels,  
 Exclaims, alas, why have I not the power  
 To tell what of my lady I do hear?  
 'Tis sure, that in the first place I must leave,  
 If I would treat of what I hear of her,  
 That which my reason cannot comprehend,  
 And of that understood  
 Great part, from inability of speech.  
 Hence if my verses shall defective prove,  
 Which fondly enter on this lady's praise,  
 The feeble understanding must be blamed,  
 And our deficient language, wanting power  
 To paint completely that which Love describes.

The sun, that all this world revolves around,  
 Sees not a thing so fair and excellent,  
 As when he shines upon the part where dwells  
 The lady for whom Love commands my song.  
 On her all heaven's intelligences gaze;  
 And they whom she enamours here below  
 Still find her image present to their thoughts,  
 When Love calms all emotions into peace.  
 With such complacency her Maker views  
 His work, that he still showers his gifts on her,  
 Beyond our nature's uttermost demand.  
 Her pure and spotless soul,  
 Which from his hand receives this heavenly grace,  
 Declares his power in her material frame;  
 For in her beauty things are seen so rare,  
 That from the eyes of those she shines upon,  
 Fly heralds to the heart, with wishes fill'd,  
 Which mount into the air and sighs become.

On her the virtue of the Deity  
 Descends, as on the angel that beholds him:

And this if gentle lady disbelieve,  
 Let her accompany her, and mark her ways.  
 Here, when she speaks, an angel boweth down  
 From heaven, who joyful testimony bears  
 How the high worth of which she is possess'd  
 Exceeds the endowments that to us belong.  
 The courteous acts which she bestows on all,  
 Rival each other in invoking Love,  
 With that persuasive voice which makes him hear.  
 Of her it may be said  
 Fair is in lady what is found in her,  
 And most is fair what most resembles her.  
 And truly we may say, her aspect aids  
 Belief in what appears a miracle,  
 Hence is our faith confirm'd, and she for this  
 Hath been created from eternity.

Things in her countenance appear which show  
 The ineffable delights of Paradise ;  
 In her sweet smile I say, and in her eyes,  
 Whither Love brings them as their proper home.  
 Our intellect they dazzle and subdue,  
 As the sun's rays o'erpower the feeble sight :  
 And since I may not view them stedfastly,  
 To say but little I must be content.  
 Her beauty showers little flames of fire,  
 With a benignant spirit animate,  
 Which is creator of all virtuous thought ;  
 And they like thunder crush  
 The innate vices which make others vile.  
 The lady then who hears her beauty blamed,  
 For wanting a deportment calm and meek,  
 Should view this pattern of humility ;  
 'Tis she that humbles every froward heart,  
 She, whom the mover of the world conceived.

My Song, thy words may seem to contradict  
 The language of a sister that thou hast ;  
 For she declares this lady, whom thou makest  
 So humble, to be scornful and severe :  
 Thou know'st that heaven is ever clear and bright,  
 And ever, as regards itself, serene ;  
 But yet our eyes, from causes manifold,  
 Do sometimes call the sun itself obscure ;  
 So when thy sister calls this lady proud,  
 She views her not according to the truth,

But forms her judgment on appearances :  
 For fearful was the soul,  
 And still has fear, so that she seems unkind  
 Whene'er I see that she observeth me.  
 Excuse thee thus, my Song, if there be need ;  
 And when thou canst, present thyself to her,  
 And say, Madonna, if it pleaseth you,  
 Your praise I will rehearse throughout the world.

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### CANZONE III.

*Le dolci rime d'Amor, ch' io solia.*

THE pleasant rhymes of Love, that I was wont  
 To seek for in my thoughts,  
 I must forsake ; not that I have not hope  
 Of a return to them,  
 But because signs of cruelty and scorn,  
 Which in my lady's looks  
 Are evident, have closed the way against  
 My customary strain.  
 And since it seems to me fit time to wait,  
 I will lay down my soft and tender style,  
 That I have held in treating upon Love,  
 And of the worth will speak  
 Which truly gives nobility to man ;  
 With verse severe and keen  
 Reproving the opinion false and base  
 Of those who hold that of nobility  
 The principle is wealth.  
 And to begin, I here invoke that lord  
 Whose dwelling-place is in my lady's eyes,  
 Through whom she is enamour'd of herself.

A certain emperor held nobility,  
 As it appear'd to him,  
 To be possession of ancestral wealth  
 With generous manners joined :  
 And there was one of lighter judgment, who  
 The saying overthrew ;  
 And took the latter clause away, perchance  
 Because he had it not.

Of him the crowd are followers, who affirm  
 Those noble who from families are sprung  
 That long have flourish'd in great opulence.  
 And such the lasting hold  
 That this so false opinion among us  
 Has taken, that men call  
 Him noble who can say I am the son  
 Or nephew of some certain man of worth,  
 Though worthless of himself :  
 But he who looks at truth deems him most vile  
 To whom the way is shown, and erreth still,  
 And walks the earth, and yet is as the dead.

Who defines man an animated tree,  
 Says first what is not true,  
 Then adds what is defective to the false ;  
 But haply sees it not.  
 He in like manner who was emperor  
 Did in defining err ;  
 For what is false he first assumed, and then  
 Defectively proceeds ;  
 For riches cannot give nobility,  
 As is supposed, nor can they take away,  
 Since in their very nature they are vile.  
 The artist cannot give  
 The pictured form unless 'tis in his mind ;  
 Nor will the upright tower  
 Bend to the stream which rolls its wave from far.  
 That they imperfect are, and vile, is clear,  
 For great howe'er the store,  
 They cannot calm, but bring increase of care ;  
 And hence the mind, which upright is and true,  
 Unshaken stands, although they pass away.

No man low-born ennobled can become,  
 Nor from low sire descend  
 A race that noble may be ever deem'd ;  
 This is by them affirm'd.  
 Hence does their reasoning seem to oppose itself ;  
 Since it maintains that time  
 Is requisite to give nobility,  
 With time defining it.  
 It follows from such argument as this,  
 That all are noble, or that all are base,  
 Or no beginning there has been to man.  
 But this I cannot grant,

Nor they moreover, if they Christians be.  
 Wherefore to healthful minds  
 Their arguments are manifestly vain :  
 And thus I reprobate their falsity,  
 And turn from them away ;  
 And now will tell, as it appears to me,  
 What is nobility, and whence it springs,  
 And what the signs that mark the noble man.

I say, each virtue in its origin  
 Springs from a single root ;  
 Virtue I mean, which happiness bestows  
 On man by its good works ;  
 This is, as Aristotle's Ethics say,  
 A habit of election,  
 Choice of the medium between two extremes ;  
 And such the words there used.  
 I say the nature of nobility  
 Ever implies the subject to be good,  
 As baseness e'er implies the subject bad.  
 And virtue such as this  
 Gives ever of its goodness proofs to all.  
 Since in one predicate  
 Two things agree, producing one effect,  
 The one must from the other be derived,  
 Or each one from a third :  
 But if the one equals the other's worth,  
 And more, from it that other rather springs :  
 Let me on this hypothesis proceed.

Nobility must be where virtue is ;  
 But may be, where 'tis not ;  
 So heaven is wherever is the sun,  
 But not conversely so.  
 And we in ladies and in early age  
 May see nobility  
 Evinced in bashfulness and modesty,  
 Which virtue differ from ;  
 Hence must proceed, as violet from black,  
 Each several virtue from nobility,  
 Or from the parent root, before explain'd.  
 Therefore let no one boast,  
 Saying, nobility is mine by birth ;  
 For they are almost gods,  
 Who, void of every sin, possess this grace ;  
 For God bestows it only on the soul



Which, in itself, he sees  
From imperfection free ; so that to few  
This seed of happiness is found conjoin'd,  
Planted by God in soul aright disposed.

The soul that this celestial grace adorns  
In secret hides it not ;  
For from the first, when she the body weds,  
She shows it, until death :  
Gentle, obedient, and alive to shame,  
Is seen in her first age,  
Careful to improve the beauty of her frame  
With all accomplishments :  
In youth is temperate and resolute,  
Replete with love and praise of courtesy,  
Placing in loyalty her sole delight :  
And in declining age  
Is prudent, just, and for her bounty known ;  
And joys within herself  
To listen and discourse for others' good :  
Then in the fourth remaining part of life,  
To God is re-espoused,  
Contemplating the end which is at hand,  
And blesseth all the seasons that are past.  
Reflect now, how the many are deceived !

Against the erring multitude, my Song,  
Declaiming, go thy way ;  
And where our lady is, when thou shalt be,  
Hide not from her the purport of thy strain ;  
For truly mayst thou say,  
I ever am discoursing of your friend.

## THE CANZONIERE OF DANTE.

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### PART I.

#### CANZONE I.

*Morte poich' io non truovo a cui mi doglia.*

O DEATH, since I find none with whom to mourn,  
Nor whom compassion of me moves to sigh,  
Wherever I may be, or whither turn ;  
And since it is by thee that I am stripped  
Of all my boldness and am clothed in woes,  
And thou revolv'st for me all Fortune's ills ;  
Since in thy hand, O Death, my life is held,  
And at thy pleasure is made rich or poor ;  
To thee, as it is meet, I turn my face,  
Coloured in likeness of a person dead :  
I come to thee, as to a pitying spirit,  
Lamenting the sweet peace thy cruel blow  
Will rob me of, O Death, if it destroy  
The lady who still bears my heart with her,  
And is the gate which leads to all true joy.

O Death, how sweet the peace thou tak'st from me,  
Which brings me to thy presence thus in tears,  
I tell not here, for thou canst see it well ;  
Whether thou view these eyes bedewed with tears,  
Or view compassion's image there impressed,  
Or view the signs I bear that I am thine :  
Alas, if by the blows of fear alone  
I thus am pained, what must the torment be !  
If I should see the light of those fair eyes  
Extinct, which is to mine so sweet a guide !  
'Tis plain thou dost approve and wish my end ;  
Sweet will my lamentation sound to thee :  
And much I fear, from what I suffer now,

That soon, to ease my woes, I shall desire  
To die, nor shall, to kill me, find a friend.

Death, if this noble lady thou shouldst kill,  
In whom perfection and the highest worth  
In all she seems and does the mind discerns,  
Virtue thou banishest, and robb'st of faith ;  
Thou tak'st from gracefulness its fair retreat ;  
Extinguishest the high result of worth ;  
Destroyest the beauty which is hers alone,  
Whose beams surpass all other so much more,  
As does beseem a creature worthy found  
To bring to us below the light of heaven ;  
Thou dost dissolve the faith, so good and strong,  
Of that true love which guideth all her ways.  
Death, if thou quench the light of her fair eyes,  
Love may declare with truth, where'er he reigns,  
My beauteous banner is for ever lost.

O Death, repent thee then of all the ill,  
So vast, that will ensue if she should die ;  
Exceeding all that earth hath ever known.  
Relax the bended bow, nor let the cord  
Have force to urge the shaft, which thou hast fixed  
With barbarous intent to pierce the heart.  
O weigh the threatened deed, be merciful ;  
Restrain the uncurbed daring for a while,  
Which is already moved with will to strike  
This lady, to whom God has given such grace.  
O Death, delay not mercy, if 'tis thine ;  
For I seem now to see the heavens uncloze,  
And angels of the Lord descend to earth,  
With will to bear away the saintly soul  
Of her whose worth is sung in hymns above.

My song, thou seest full well how subtle is  
The thread whereon my hope depends, and seest  
How powerless I am without this lady ;  
Hence with thy plain and humble reasoning  
Go forth, my last-born child, nor use delay ;  
For to thy faith I do commit my prayer ;  
And with that meekness which investeth thee,  
Approach, my piteous song, the throne of death ;  
So that thou break the gates of cruelty,  
And reach the blissful fruit of thy desert.  
And should Death's fatal will be turned aside

By thee, O haste, and let our lady hear  
 The grateful news ; and comfort to her bring ;  
 So that again be given to the world  
 This gentle soul to whom my life is bound.

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CANZONE II.

*Io sento al d'Amor la gran possanza.*

I FEEL the mighty power of Love so great  
 That I can not endure  
 Its suffering long ; whence I am sorely grieved ;  
 For he is ever growing in his strength,  
 And I feel mine decay ;  
 So that each hour I am weaker than before.  
 I ask not Love to grant more than I wish,  
 For should he grant all that the will requires,  
 The virtue which from nature I derive  
 Could bear it not, for it is limited :  
 And this it is of which my heart complains,  
 That power corresponds not to desire.  
 But if from good desire reward should spring,  
 I claim it, in a grant of longer life,  
 From those fair eyes, whose splendour, sweetly mild,  
 Brings comfort when I feel Love's influence.

The rays proceeding from those beauteous eyes  
 Pierce mine of her enamoured,  
 And sweets impart where bitterness I feel ;  
 And journey onwards, like to travellers  
 Who erst have passed that way ;  
 Remembering the place where Love they left,  
 When through the eyes they led him to my heart.  
 Thus their return confers a boon on me ;  
 And when they hide themselves they do her wrong  
 Whose votary I am, with love so true,  
 That life I only prize for serving her ;  
 And all my thoughts, which spring from Love alone,  
 Press forward to her service as their goal.  
 So strong my zeal to labour for her good,  
 That could I think 't were gained by leaving her,  
 Light were the task, though certain were my death.

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O true must be the love which captivates,  
 And strong must be the chain,  
 Since I would do for it what I aver :  
 For love exists not of an equal weight  
 To that which pleasure finds  
 In death, from serving of another well.  
 And in this will I was confirmed, as soon  
 As birth was given to the strong desire  
 I feel, through virtue of the pleasing traits  
 Of that fair face, where all that's fair is found.  
 Servant I am, and, when I think of whom,  
 And what she is, perfect content is mine :  
 For man may serve her well against her will ;  
 And though her youth may rob me of reward,  
 Hope shows a time when she will be more just ;  
 Provided life defend itself so long.

When on a sweet desire I meditate,  
 Born of the grand desire  
 Which all my energies to virtue prompts,  
 I seem rewarded far above desert ;  
 And further still, I seem  
 Wrongly the name of servant to retain :  
 For service is converted to good-will,  
 When viewed with pleasure by a master kind ;  
 But since to rigid truth I would adhere,  
 'Tis fit that such desire be service deemed ;  
 For all my efforts made to labour well,  
 Are less directed to my private good,  
 Than that of her, who holds me in her power.  
 I labour that her worth may more be prized,  
 And am entirely hers. It is my pride  
 That Love hath made me worthy of such honour.

No power but that of Love could render me  
 Deserving to be made  
 Subject of her, who never is enamoured ;  
 But, as a lady unconcerned, regards  
 The mind inspired with love,  
 That cannot pass without her one short hour :  
 I have not seen her yet so many times  
 That beauty which is new I have not found ;  
 Whence love within me gains increasing strength.  
 From every new addition to the pleasure ;  
 And hence my state remains unchanged, so long  
 As Love accustoms me by turns to feel

One bitter suffering, and one sweet delight,  
Dependent on that time of frequent pain,  
Which lasts from when I lose the sight of her,  
Until the moment when it is regained.

My beauteous Song, if thou resemblest me,  
Thou wilt show less disdain,  
Than goodness such as thine might well become ;  
Hence I beseech thee subtilize thy skill,  
My sweet and lovely one,  
In choosing mode or way may suit thy need  
If cavalier invite thee, or retain,  
Before thou with his pleasure dost comply,  
Spy whether thou canst make him of thy sect ;  
And if thou canst not, leave him with all speed ;  
For with the good the good are ever found :  
But oft it happens, that with one we are thrown  
In company, who is unjustly blamed,  
By ill report spread by another's tongue.  
The wicked shun, though famed for wit or skill,  
For it were never wise to sort with them.

My Song, before thou elsewhere take thy way,  
Go to the three least guilty of our city :  
Salute the two, the other strive to win,  
And from an evil sect to draw away :  
Tell him, the good ne'er war against the good ;  
But rather strive the wicked to subdue ;  
Tell him, that he who through the fear of shame  
From folly flies not, is a fool indeed ;  
But he may fear who is of vice afraid,  
For shunning one he finds the other's cure.

## CANZONE III.

E' m'incresce di me sì malamente.

I MOURN my piteous state so painfully,  
 That the amount of grief  
 From pity and from suffering is the same.  
 For now, alas ! I feel with deep regret  
 That in my will's despite,  
 The breath of the last sigh is gathering  
 Within that heart, which the fair eyes did wound,  
 When Love, with his own hand disclosed their charms,  
 To bring me to the pass of my undoing.  
 Ah me ! how calm and meek,  
 How soft and sweet toward me they were raised,  
 When they at first began  
 To cause my death, which now I so deplore,  
 Saying ; our beams are messengers of peace.

Peace to the heart we bring, to you delight,  
 Said once unto my eyes  
 Those of the lady kind and beautiful ;  
 But when they from their intellect had learned  
 That through the force of her  
 My mind was taken from me totally,  
 They turned and bore Love's banners far away ;  
 So that their pleasing show of victory  
 Hath never from that moment been beheld :  
 Hence hath my soul remained  
 In sorrow, who from them expected joy ;  
 And now she sees the heart,  
 At brink of death, to whom she was espoused,  
 And is compelled to part from it enamoured.

Enamoured and lamenting, takes her way,  
 Beyond the gates of life,  
 The soul disconsolate, whom Love expels :  
 In such affliction deep she leaves the world,  
 That ere she hence departs,  
 Her Maker with compassion hears her plaint.  
 At the heart's inmost core she makes a stand,  
 Together with the remnant of that life  
 Which is extinguished only by her flight :  
 There she complains of Love,

Who drives her from the confines of this world ;  
 And many a fond embrace  
 She gives the spirits, which weep unceasingly,  
 That their companion they are soon to lose.

The image of this lady hath a seat  
 Exalted in my mind,  
 On which Love placed her, for he was her guide.  
 And all the ill she sees affects not her ;  
 But she more beauteous is  
 Than ever now, and happier seems her smile :  
 Her fatal eyes she raises, and exclaims,  
 Calling to her who grieves she must depart,  
 Begone, thou wretched one, away, begone :  
 This the beloved exclaimed,  
 Who wars against me thus as she is wont ;  
 But now my pain is less,  
 For all my feeling is far less acute,  
 And nearer is the ending of my woes.

The day on which this lady came to earth,  
 As it is found inscribed  
 In memory's record, which begins to fade,  
 My young and tender frame was made to feel  
 A passion then unknown,  
 So potent that it left me full of fear ;  
 For over all my faculties was thrown  
 A curb so sudden, that I fell to earth,  
 O'erpowered by a voice which struck the heart :  
 And, if the record errs not,  
 The master-spirit trembled with such force,  
 That it seemed sure that Death  
 Was come into the world to take it thence :  
 He who was cause of this laments it now.

When the great beauty I again beheld  
 Which makes me so lament,  
 Ye gentle ladies, whom I have addressed,  
 That virtue which has most nobility,  
 In gazing with delight,  
 Perceived full well that its chief ill was born ;  
 And knew what the desire created was,  
 By admiration so intent and strong ;  
 So that in tears it to the others said :  
 There shall arrive, in place  
 Of one whom I have seen, the beauteous form



Which makes me fear even now ;  
 And over all of us shall mistress be,  
 Soon as her eyes their pleasure shall declare.

To you, O youthful ladies, have I sung,  
 Whose eyes with every beauty are adorned,  
 And who have thoughtful minds subdued by Love ;  
 To you then let my words  
 Be recommended wheresoe'er they are heard ;  
 And hear me now declare,  
 That I forgive that beauteous thing, my death,  
 Who is the cause, and pity ne'er hath shown.

## CANZONE IV.

*Così nel mio parlar voglio esser aspro.*

SEVERE shall be my speech, as in her deeds  
 Is she, the rock so beautiful and cold,  
 Who every hour acquires  
 More hardness and a nature more unkind :  
 And clothes her person, too, in adamant,  
 So that by strength of armour, or retreat,  
 No quiver sends a dart  
 Can ever reach a part of her exposed ;  
 And she still wounds ; nor space nor coat of mail  
 Can man protect, to escape her mortal blows,  
 Which fly as they had wings,  
 And him o'ertake, and all his armour rend ;  
 Whence skill or might avails me not 'gainst her.

No shield of mine I find but she can break,  
 No place that can conceal me from her view ;  
 Yet as the flower crowns  
 The stem, so she the summit of my mind.  
 Regardless of my pain she seems, and moved  
 No more than ship unlifted by the wave.  
 The weight which sinks me down  
 Is such as verse unequal were to tell :  
 Alas ! thou pitiless, tormenting file,  
 Which silently art shortening my life,  
 Why fear'st thou not as much,  
 By piecemeal, thus to wear my heart,  
 As I to tell the world whence springs thy power ?

My heart more trembles when I think of her  
 In place where I may draw another's eye,  
 Through terror lest my thought  
 Should glimmer through the veil, and be discerned,  
 Than when I think of death, who every sense  
 Already with the teeth of Love devours.  
 The thought on which I muse  
 Strips bare my energy, and slacks its work.  
 By Love I am stricken down, who o'er me stands,  
 Wielding the sword with which he Dido slew.  
 Suppliant I call on him,  
 Imploring mercy in a humble prayer :  
 And he seems fixed all mercy to deny.

From time to time this cruel victor lifts  
 His hand, in threats to take my feeble life ;  
 Thrown down and stretched on earth  
 He holds me, wearied out with struggling :  
 Then cries of anguish rise within my mind,  
 And the red blood, dispersed throughout the veins,  
 Runs swift toward the heart,  
 Which calls it, leaving me all pale and wan.  
 On the left side, he strikes me with such force,  
 That with the agony the heart rebounds.  
 I then say : should he lift  
 His hand again, Death's arms will me enfold  
 Ere that the blow shall have descended down.

O could I see him cleave the heart in twain  
 Of her, the cruel one, who mangles mine ;  
 Death then would not appal,  
 To whom I hasten through her beauty's charm :  
 For this assassin, who both robs and kills,  
 Wrongs me alike in sunshine and in shade.  
 Alas ! why cries she not  
 For me, as I for her, engulfed in fire ?  
 For quick would I exclaim : Your help is here ;  
 And anxious to assist, would do like him  
 Who in the flaxen locks,  
 Which Love for my destruction crimps and gilds,  
 Would fix the hand ; and then my bliss were full.

When once those golden tresses I had seized,  
 Which have to me as scourges been and goads,  
 Though grasped before the dawn,  
 Them would I hold at vespers and each bell ;

Nor piteous nor courteous would I be,  
 But like the bear in sportive mood would play :  
 And should Love punish me,  
 I then would be a thousand fold avenged :  
 And on those beauteous eyes, whence fly the sparks  
 That evermore inflame my wounded heart,  
 Close would I fix my gaze,  
 To be revenged for her avoiding me ;  
 And then would peace restore to her, with love.

My Song, unto the lady straight repair,  
 By whom my heart is wounded, and who steals  
 From me my chief delight ;  
 And pierce her with an arrow through the heart ;  
 For bright the honour by revenge acquired.

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### CANZONE V.

*Amor, tu vedi ben che questa donna.*

O LOVE, thou seeest well this lady slights  
 Thy influence in all seasons of the year,  
 She who is wont to reign o'er others fair,  
 And hath discovered that she was my queen,  
 Thanks to thy ray, that on my countenance shines.  
 Of every cruelty the mistress grown,  
 She seems not to possess a lady's heart ;  
 But one of creature wild least warmed by love ;  
 For both in summer's heat and winter's cold,  
 I see in her a lady's form, which looks  
 As if 't were fashioned of a beauteous rock  
 By hand of him who best can grave the gem.

And I who am more firm than is the rock,  
 In thee obeying, through a lady's charms,  
 In secret bear the blow which with that stone  
 Thou hast wounded me, as if I were a rock,  
 That by its presence had long troubled thee ;  
 So that it reached my heart where I am flint ;  
 And never hath been found a precious stone  
 Gifted with native ray or solar power,  
 Whose virtue could suffice, or friendly light,  
 To guard my bark from striking on that rock ;  
 So that its chilling nature bring me not  
 Where I shall lie and feel the cold of death.

Thou knowest, my sovereign, that by piercing cold  
Water is turned into a crystal rock  
Beneath the arctic skies, in realms of frost ;  
And the air is to the colder element  
Converted, so that water ever reigns,  
Through cold, an icy mistress near the pole :  
So in the presence of her cold regard  
My blood in every season is congealed ;  
And by the thought which shortens most my days,  
I am converted to a frozen mass ;  
That after melts, escaping at the eyes,  
Through which the un pitying light first entrance found.

In her concentrated is all beauty's light ;  
So of all cruelty the cold intense  
Runs to her heart, where thy light never shines ;  
Yet are her beams so lovely to my eyes  
When I regard her, that her form I see  
In every rock and thing that meets my sight.  
Her eyes upon me shed so sweet a ray,  
It makes me every other lady slight.  
Would that she were a lady less unkind  
Toward me, who supplicate by night and day  
For place and time to serve but only her ;  
Nor, for aught else do length of days desire.

Then, Love divine, who art before all time,  
All motion, and before the solar beam,  
Have pity of me, fallen on evil days ;  
Enter the heart of her, for 'tis full time  
So that thou mayst expel from it the frost ;  
Which lets me not like others live my term :  
For if thy winter's storm o'ertake me now,  
Weak as I am, this gem of highest price  
Will see me laid within the narrow tomb,  
Never to rise till the appointed time,  
When I shall see if in the world hath been  
Lady as fair as this who is so stern.

My Song, within my mind a lady dwells,  
One who, although to me she is as stone,  
Gives boldness to me where mankind seem ice ;  
So that for her so cold I dare invent  
The novelty which shines throughout thy form,  
And ne'er before in time hath been conceived.

## CANZONE VI.

*Io son venuto al punto della rota.*

THE circling year's cold point I have attained,  
 When the horizon gives the sun repose,  
 And in the east brings forth the heavenly twins.  
 The star of Love remains removed from view,  
 Hid by the lucid ray, across it thrown,  
 So widely as to form for it a veil :  
 The planet also which gives strength to frost  
 Moves full disclosed through the capacious arch,  
 In which each of the seven cast little shade :  
 And yet no thought of Love,  
 With which I am loaded, ever quits my mind,  
 That harder is than agate to retain  
 The image of a lady formed of stone.

In Ethiopia's sands the pilgrim wind  
 Arises and the lurid air disturbs,  
 That burns beneath the scorching solar ray ;  
 Then, the sea passing, draws from it a mist  
 So thick, that if no other wind disturb,  
 It covers and shuts up this hemisphere ;  
 And then dissolves, and falls in whitened flakes  
 Of chilling snow, or showers of noisome rain,  
 Whence saddened is the air, and nature mourns.  
 Yet Love, who all his nets  
 Withdraws to heaven, as the tempest swells,  
 Never abandons me, beauty so great  
 Adorns this cruel lady whom I serve.

Each bird that seeks the genial heat hath fled  
 From Europe's lands, in whose extensive bounds  
 The seven frosty stars are never lost ;  
 The voices of the rest are silent all,  
 To sound no more till verdant spring's return ;  
 Unless it be that grief calls forth their plaints ;  
 And every animal by nature gay  
 Is liberated from the thrall of Love,

Their spirit being deadened by the cold ;  
And mine with love burns more :  
For never am I robbed of the sweet thoughts  
Which are not given me by the season's change,  
But by a lady in youth's tender spring.

The leaves have passed the fated term, prescribed  
When Aries by his influence drew them forth  
To decorate the world ; the grass is dead,  
And every verdant bough from us is hidden,  
Save in the pine, the laurel, or the fir,  
Or other plant by nature ever green.  
The season too is harsh, and so severe,  
That all the pretty flowerets of the plain  
Are killed, unable to endure the frost ;  
Yet is the amorous thorn  
Fixed in my heart, nor Love can it withdraw ;  
For firm is my resolve to hold it there,  
Long as I live, though life should never end.

The veins pour forth the watery streams which smoke  
From vapours that earth holds within her womb,  
Sending them up aloft from the abyas,  
Whence glad I found a road to cheerful day  
Now to a river changed, and such shall be,  
Long as stern winter's rude assault shall last.  
Enamelled is the surface of the earth,  
And the dead pool converted into glass,  
Through cold which closes every outward pore :  
Yet I still wage my war,  
Nor backward have recoiled a single step,  
Nor will recoil ; for if the pain be sweet,  
All other sweets must be surpassed by death.

My Song, say what will be my fate, in days  
Far different and sweet, when Love shall shower  
His blessings on the earth from every heaven ;  
Since even amid these frosts  
Love is in me alone, nor elsewhere found ?  
My fate will be that of a man of stone,  
If stone shall be this tender maiden's heart.

## CANZONE VII.

*Amor, dacchè conosci pur ch' io mi doglia.*

Love, since my lamentations must have vent,  
 That men may mark my words,  
 And see how all my virtue is extinct,  
 O give me wisdom with the will to weep ;  
 So that my unchained grief  
 Be told in words as strong as what I feel.  
 Thy will is that I die, to that I bend ;  
 But me who shall excuse, unless I tell  
 All that thou mak'st me feel !  
 Who will believe the toils in which I am caught ?  
 But if thou giv'st me power of speech as great  
 As is my torment, lord, then ere I die,  
 Let not this cruel maid hear my complaint ;  
 For should she know what inwardly I feel,  
 Pity would make her beauteous face less fair.

Fly from her where I will, 'tis vain ; her form  
 Imagination brings  
 Swift to my mind as thought, which leads her there.  
 The silly soul, ingenious to its harm,  
 Paints her all loveliness  
 And cruelty, inventing its own pain ;  
 Then gazes, and when filled with the desire,  
 Which strongly by the eyes attracts to her,  
 Is anger'd 'gainst itself,  
 For kindling fire, where it burns wretchedly.  
 What argument of reason can controul  
 My thoughts, which as an inward tempest rage !  
 The anguish which the bosom cannot hold  
 Breathes from the lips, so that 'tis understood,  
 And even to the eyes gives their desert.

The pictured form, my enemy, remains  
 Victorious and severe,  
 And lords it o'er the freedom of the will ;  
 She of herself enamoured, makes me seek  
 The substance of this shade ;  
 As like to like is ever wont to flee.  
 I know that I am snow which seeks the sun :  
 But to resist is vain ; like him I move

Who, in another's power  
 Marches obediently where he is killed.  
 When I am near her, words I seem to hear  
 Which say : Haste, haste, this man thou shalt see die.  
 Then I look out on whom to call for aid ;  
 And thus am led at pleasure of the eyes  
 Which most unjustly give me mortal wounds.

What I become when wounded thus, O Love,  
 Thou canst relate, not I ;  
 Thou, the spectator of my lifeless state ;  
 And though the soul return unto the heart,  
 Knowledge and memory  
 From her were sever'd while she was divorced.  
 When I revive, and look upon the wound  
 By which I was undone when I was struck,  
 No comfort can I find,  
 But every limb is shaken by my fear ;  
 And the discoloured features testify  
 How great the lightning's force which fell on me ;  
 For though by a sweet smile the shaft be thrown  
 Yet long the features darkened will remain,  
 Because the spirit cannot feel assured.

Thus hast thou used me, Love, amid the Alps,  
 And in the river's vale,  
 Along whose shore thy strength I ever feel :  
 Living and dead thou treat'st me as thou wilt,  
 Thanks to the cruel light  
 Whose flashes are the harbingers of death.  
 Alas ! no ladies here, no gentle minds  
 I see, in whom my sorrows cause regret.  
 If she be unconcerned,  
 Never from others can I hope for aid.  
 And this fair spirit banished from thy court,  
 O Love, regards no blow from shaft of thine :  
 Pride has a breast-plate given of such defence,  
 That every dart is blunted ere it pierce ;  
 For heart so armed no weapon can offend.

My little mountain Song, thou goest thy way ;  
 Haply, my city, Florence, thou wilt see,  
 Who 'gainst me bars her gates,  
 Stripped of all pity and devoid of love.  
 If thou within her walls shouldst enter, say :  
 My master can with you no more wage war ;



There, whence I come, he by a chain is bound  
 So strong, that, should your cruelty relent,  
 Here to return he is no longer free.

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### CANZONE VIII.

La dispietata mente che pur mira.

REMEMBRANCE, which un pitying turns the view  
 Backward to times that are for ever gone,  
 On one hand carries war into my heart ;  
 On th' other hand, the fond desire, which draws  
 My thoughts to the sweet country I have left,  
 Oppresses it with all the force of Love :  
 Nor do I feel within it strength enough  
 And courage to maintain a long defence,  
 Gentle Madonna, if not helped by you :  
 If then you may think fit  
 Ever to try and save it by your aid,  
 O now be pleased to send your kind salute,  
 By which its virtue may be comforted.

Be pleased, O Lady mine, to fail me not,  
 In this the heart's distress which loves you so ;  
 For succour it expects from you alone  
 The generous master never checks his steed  
 When by the servant called who needs relief ;  
 For his own honour he defends, not him.  
 And truly, my heart's grief afflicts me more  
 When I reflect, Madonna, that your form  
 Is there depicted by the hand of Love ;  
 An argument why you  
 Should deem it worthy of the greater care ;  
 For He, from whom all goodness must be learned,  
 Holds us more dear that we his image are.

If you, my sweetest hope, should hesitate,  
 And still delay in granting my request,  
 Know, that expectance has the limit reached ;  
 For on the verge of death my powers stand :  
 And this you cannot doubt, who see me moved  
 To seek the very last resource of hope :  
 For man should every grievous burthen bear,

Even the load which presses to the death,  
Rather than prove his greatest friend's true faith,  
Not knowing what may chance.  
And should an evil answer be returned,  
Thing there is not that costs a man so dear ;  
For death it hastens and embitters more.

You, lady, are the one whom most I love,  
And who the boon most valued can confer,  
And upon whom my hope rests most secure :  
For only to serve you I covet life ;  
And what may to your honour best conduce  
I wish and ask ; all else to me gives pain :  
'Tis yours to give me what none other dares ;  
For "yes" and "no" hath Love placed in your hand,  
Unfettered ; whence my service is my pride.  
My confidence in you,  
From your humane and noble bearing springs ;  
For he who sees you, by your outward air  
Well knows that pity hath her seat within.

Then let your kind salute at last go forth,  
And come into the long expecting heart,  
Whose wishes, gentle lady, you have heard :  
But know, that at the entrance there is found  
A portal strong, barred by the dart which Love  
Hurled on the day when I was made his thrall :  
Wherefore admission is denied to all  
Except Love's messengers, who have the power  
To open, by his will who keeps it closed :  
Hence in the war I wage,  
This aid's arrival might be to my loss,  
If unattended by the messengers  
Of him, the lord whose pleasure I obey.

My Song, thy journey should be short and swift,  
For well thou knowest how brief will be the time  
That he who sends thee, if unhelpt, can last.

## CANZONE IX.

*Amor, che muovi tua virtù dal cielo.*

O LOVE, who send'st thy virtue down from heaven,  
 As the bright sun his beams,  
 Who where his ray finds most nobility  
 There kindles most his genial influence ;  
 And as he cold and darkness puts to flight,  
 So thou, O mighty lord,  
 Expellest from the heart all vulgar thoughts,  
 Nor anger against thee can long contend ;  
 From thee must flow each blessing which the world  
 With toil and ardour labours to obtain ;  
 Without thee is destroyed  
 All power we possess of doing well ;  
 Lost like a picture on a gloomy wall,  
 Which cannot show its worth,  
 Nor give delight from colour nor from art.

Thy light for ever strikes upon the heart  
 As sunbeam on the star ;  
 For from my earliest days my soul became  
 The handmaid of thy majesty and power :  
 Hence has its life a thought which leads me on,  
 And with its sweet discourse  
 Directs me to regard each beauteous thing  
 With most delight when it most pleasing is.  
 By thus regarding hath a youthful maiden  
 Entered my mind, and made me prisoner,  
 And lighted up a flame,  
 As water glows from brightness of the fire ;  
 For at her coming, thy effulgent rays,  
 Which she still sheds on me,  
 Had mounted all aloft into her eyes.

Beauteous and gentle as her nature is,  
 And lovely all she does,  
 So does imagination, which ne'er rests,  
 Adorn her in my mind where she resides :  
 Not that my fancy's self hath subtilty  
 For argument so high,  
 But gains a daring from thy influence,  
 Beyond the strength which nature grants to man.

Faith in thy virtue from her beauty springs,  
 As strong as can be given by an effect  
 Produced on thing of worth :  
 So the sun's virtue is confirmed by fire,  
 Which neither gives him strength nor takes away,  
 But by effects declares  
 The mightier goodness of his power in heaven.

O Sovereign, then, whose nature is so kind,  
 That from thy majesty,  
 Nobility and every other grace  
 Bestowed on earth, their origin derive ;  
 Look down and see how wretched is my life,  
 And pity of it take :  
 For grievous at my heart I feel the flame  
 Which by this lady's beauty is inspired.  
 With thy sweet influence, Love, O make her feel  
 The great desire I have of seeing her :  
 O suffer not that she  
 Should bring me in the day of youth to death ;  
 For she perceives not yet how she can please,  
 Nor knows how strong my love,  
 Nor that my peace she carries in her eyes.

Great honour thou shalt gain in aiding me,  
 And I a bounteous gift,  
 Prized in proportion as I know that where  
 I am, my life I cannot long defend ;  
 For all my spirits are assailed by one  
 So strong, that reason says,  
 Short time they can abide without an end :  
 And mayst thou also make thy power felt  
 In this fair lady who deserves it well ;  
 For her deserts may claim  
 That every good should bear her company,  
 As one who hath been born into the world  
 Supremely to command  
 The minds of all who contemplate her worth.

## CANZONE X.

*Poesia che Amor del tutto m' ha lasciato.*

SINCE Love hath utterly abandoned me,  
 Not with my will,  
 For never was my state so full of joy ;  
 But that he pitied so  
 The sufferings of my heart  
 He could no longer bear to hear its plaint :  
 Deserted thus by Love, I will declaim  
 Against the vice  
 New born in us, which calls distortedly  
 That which is base and vile  
 By a name of mighty worth,  
 The name of gallantry, a grace so fair  
 That where it reigns, it gives  
 A worthy claim to the imperial robe.  
 It is the banner true  
 That designates the troop where virtue dwells :  
 Wherefore, I trust, that if I well defend  
 True gallantry, as understood by me,  
 Love will restore me to his grace again.

There are who prodigally waste their wealth,  
 Thinking to gain  
 An estimation where the good are found,  
 Who after death afford  
 A refuge in the mind  
 To those who rank among the nobly wise ;  
 But their profuseness cannot please the good ;  
 For thriftiness  
 Were wisdom, and the ills they would avoid  
 Attending the mistake  
 Of them and all the tribe  
 Who in their reasoning form this judgment false.  
 Who shall not call it sin  
 To riot in excess and gluttony ?  
 And gorgeously to dress,  
 As if for sale where purchasers are fools ?  
 The wise ne'er estimate a man by robes,  
 These are mere ornament ;  
 But sense and generous hearts are what they prize.

Others there are, who laughing at mankind,  
 Would fain be thought  
 Of flowing wit and liberal intellect,  
 By those who are deceived,  
 Seeing them laugh at what  
 Their humbler understanding cannot reach :  
 And excellent in phrase is their discourse.  
 Scorned by the few,  
 Contented by the many to be praised.  
 No lovely lady  
 Ever enamours them ;  
 In conversation frivolous and false,  
 A foot they would not stir  
 In courtship as true gallantry demands ;  
 But as the thief goes forth  
 To rob, so they to steal a base delight ;  
 But ladies are not so to manners dead,  
 And virtuous gallantry,  
 That they should act as things of reason void.

Virtue which leaves the strait way is not pure ;  
 Hence is condemned,  
 Nor owned where virtue is demanded most,  
 That is, in quiet men  
 Of spiritual life,  
 Or habits which to science are inclined.  
 If then this virtue in a knight be praised,  
 It must be caused  
 By many things commixed, for one is found  
 With one man well to suit,  
 And with another ill.  
 But virtue which is pure suits well with all ;  
 It is the comforter,  
 And love and perfect works with it are joined.  
 Ruled by this three-fold good  
 Is gallantry, and in its essence lies ;  
 The sun resembling, in whose essence dwell  
 Both light and heat, combined  
 With the perfection of a beauteous form.

Although there be conjunction of the stars,  
 Which from its course  
 Turns gallantry, and more than I recount ;  
 Yet I to whom 'tis known,  
 Thanks to a gentle lady,  
 Whose every act example of it gave,

Will not conceal its worth ; for it were guilt  
 In me so vile,  
 That I should seem one of its enemies :  
 Henceforth then shall my song  
 More subtilly declare  
 The truth of it ; but I know not to whom.  
 By him then here I swear,  
 Who Love is named, and fulness is of bliss,  
 That without virtuous works  
 True praise by no one ever can be gained.  
 Therefore if this my argument be good,  
 As every one admits,  
 Virtue with virtue mixed is gallantry.

This virtue is the image of the sun,  
 Who from the east  
 Goes forth advancing till his light he hides ;  
 His beauteous beams infuse  
 Vigour and life below  
 To matter as it fitly is disposed :  
 So she despising the unworthy herd  
 Of those whose form  
 Resembles man's, but by their fruit are known,  
 Ill answering to the leaf,  
 By habits vile debased,  
 Like blessings on the gentle heart confers  
 In gifts of life, is prompt  
 With joy and acts of favour, fair and new,  
 Fresh springing every hour.  
 He takes the sun for pattern who takes her.  
 Shame on the recreant knights, perverse and false,  
 The enemies of her  
 Who to the prince of stars may be compared.

The man she favours freely gives and takes,  
 And never rues ;  
 Nor does the sun in giving light to stars,  
 And by reflected light  
 Receiving aid from them ;  
 But one and other in the exchange delight.  
 He never is provoked to wrath by words ;  
 But those alone  
 He hears which pleasing are, and of himself.  
 Are ever full of praise.  
 Dear for himself he is held,  
 And loved by every person who is wise ;

As for the vile and rude  
 He prizes equally their praise or blame :  
 No greatness swells his pride ;  
 But when by duties of his station called,  
 His ardour and his courage to display,  
 He then wins praise from all.  
 How opposite the course the living take !

---

CANZONE XI.

Tre donne intorno al cuor mi son venute.

THREE ladies have retreated to my heart,  
 And at the portal sit,  
 Where Love resides within,  
 Who in his sovereignty commands my life.  
 So great their beauty, and their virtue such,  
 That he, the mighty lord,  
 Whose seat is in my heart,  
 Can scarcely find fit terms to speak of them.  
 Each one seems melancholy and in fear  
 Like an unhappy exile faint and weary,  
 Whom all the world forsakes,  
 And nobleness and virtue nought avail.  
 In days of old they were  
 (As report tells of them) mankind's delight ;  
 Now are they hated and contemned by all.  
 These ladies, thus forlorn,  
 Are come as to the mansion of a friend ;  
 For well they know that he I name dwells there.

In many a piteous note one vents her grief,  
 And on her hand reclines,  
 Like a dissevered rose ;  
 The naked arm, the pillar of her woe,  
 Feels the bright gem, which from the cheek drops down :  
 The other hand conceals  
 The face bedewed with tears ;  
 Unshod, unzoned, she still appears a lady.  
 Soon as the tattered gown revealed to Love  
 Her form in part, of which to speak were wrong,  
 Pity he felt and wrath,  
 And questions asked of her and of her grief.  
 O thou, the staff of few,



She said, in voice oft broken by her sighs,  
The claim of kindred sends us here to thee.  
I, who do sorrow most,  
Am Rectitude, the sister of thy mother ;  
How poor, thou seest by these my robes and zone.

When she had made herself thus clearly known,  
My sovereign was seized  
With grief and shame, and asked,  
Who were the other two who were with her.  
And she, who was so prone to melt in tears,  
Soon as she heard his words,  
Burned with increase of woe,  
Saying : Now grieveest thou not to see these eyes ?  
Then thus began : The Nile, as well thou knowest,  
Springs forth a little river at its source,  
In land where heaven's great light  
Deprives the earth of every willow's leaf :  
Beside that virgin wave,  
I brought forth her who here is at my side,  
And with her flaxen tresses dries the tear :  
And she, my fair offspring,  
Herself admiring in the fountain pure  
Brought forth this other, more removed from me.

Love paused awhile, his speech being checked by sighs ;  
And then, with softened eyes  
Which playful were at first,  
Saluted his unhappy relatives.  
He after took a dart of either kind,  
And said : Look up, be cheered ;  
Behold the arms I need,  
Now soiled and dull you see, from want of use.  
Bounty and Temperance, and the others who  
Are daughters of our blood, in beggary rove.  
But though this be an ill,  
Let the eyes weep for it, and lips lament  
Of men, whom it concerns,  
And are exposed to influence of such skies ;  
Not we, who are of the eternal rock ;  
For though sore wounded now,  
Yet still shall we endure, and yet shall find  
A race by whom this dart shall shine again.

And I, who hear the speech divine, and see  
How exiles great as these

Are grieved and comforted,  
 Henceforth my banishment an honour deem :  
 And though a judgment, or the force of fate,  
 Wills that this fickle world should change  
 The flowers white to black,  
 To fall among the good is worthy praise :  
 And if the beauteous star which guides these eyes  
 Were not by distance taken from my view,  
 Which hath my soul inflamed,  
 Light should I count the burden I endure :  
 But so this inward fire  
 Already hath consumed the bones and nerves,  
 That Death upon my breast hath placed the key.  
 Hence though I may have erred,  
 Months have revolved long since I were forgiven,  
 If error dies provided man repent.

My song, forbid that man should touch thy robes,  
 To see what beauteous lady does conceal :  
 Let what is shown suffice ;  
 Refuse to all the sweet and envied fruit  
 For which each hand is stretched ;  
 And should it happen that thou ever find'st  
 A friend of virtue, and he thee entreat,  
 Robe thee in colours new ;  
 Then show thyself, and make all loving hearts  
 Desire the flower of outward form so fair.

~~~~~

### CANZONE XII.

*Doglia me reca nello core ardire.*

GRIEF brings a daring spirit to my heart,  
 To aid the will, which is the friend of truth :  
 If therefore in my verse  
 Are words that seem to censure all mankind,  
 Ladies, be not surprised,  
 But learn to know your own perverse desire ;  
 For beauty, which is yours by Love's consent,  
 By his desire of old,  
 Was formed to wait on virtue, and none else  
 'Gainst which decree you sin.  
 To you, who are enamoured then, I say :  
 If beauty hath to you,  
 Virtue to us, been given,

And power to Love to form of two but one,  
 You rightly cannot love,  
 But ought to hide all beauty you possess ;  
 For virtue was its aim, and is not yours.  
 Alas ! where tends my strain !  
 I say, the scorn were just,  
 Noble and rightly praised, in lady who  
 Should cast away her beauty from her care.

Man from himself hath banished virtue far ;  
 Not man indeed, but beast resembling man :  
 O God, how wonderful  
 To wish to fall abased from lord to slave !  
 Or worse, from life to death !  
 Virtue is to her Maker still submiss,  
 Obeys, and honour seeks to gain.  
 O ladies, long as Love  
 Enrols her of the glorious family  
 Which grace his blissful court ;  
 Forth from the happy gates she goes with joy  
 And to her lady hies ;  
 There sojourns joyfully ;  
 With joy her noble vassalage performs ;  
 In her short pilgrimage  
 Preserves, adorns, enriches what she finds ;  
 And wars with Death till he excites no care.  
 O handmaid dear and pure,  
 In heaven thy mould was cast ;  
 Thou only mak'st the noble, and this proves  
 That thou the treasure art which never fails.

Slave not of lord, but of a worthless slave,  
 The man becomes who from that lord withdraws.  
 Hear now, how dear he pays,  
 If you consider well the twofold loss,  
 Who strays from virtue's path :  
 So vile and wayward is this servile lord,  
 That the eyes which render light unto the mind,  
 Through him are firmly closed ;  
 So that his slave behoves to follow one  
 Who seeks but foolishness.  
 And now, that you may profit by my song,  
 I will descend, and make  
 The structure and the parts  
 More simple, that the sense may be more clear ;  
 For rarely, under veil,

Dark parables the understanding reach ;  
And hence with you my reasoning should be plain ;  
This for your good I do,  
Surely not for my own :  
That every slave of vice you may abhor ;  
For who delight us make us like themselves.

He who is slave of vice is like the man  
Who follows swift his lord, and knows not where,  
Along a rueful way :  
So fares the miser in pursuit of wealth,  
Which lords it over all :  
The miser runs, but swifter flies his peace ;  
O blindness of the mind, which cannot see  
The folly of thy will !  
He strives incessantly to swell his hoard,  
Doting on boundless wealth.  
Behold it reached by Death, who levels all :  
Now say, what is thy gain  
Thou undone miser blind ?  
Reply, if thou art able : there is none.  
A curse hath been thy couch,  
Which oft deceived thee with such flattering dreams ;  
Accursed thy unprofitable store,  
Less lost if given to dogs ;  
For late and early thou  
Hast reaped, and fondly grasped with both thy hands,  
That which so soon shall leave thee far away.

As wealth with thirst immoderate is heaped,  
So with immoderate grasp it is retained :  
This avarice compels  
The many into bondage, and if one  
Resist, 'tis with much pain.  
Where art thou Death ? Kind Fortune where art thou ?  
Why not let loose the miser's unspent heaps ?  
If done,—then who is heir ?  
I know not ; for a sphere encircles us  
Which writes our fate above.  
The fault is Reason's which corrects him not.  
Says he : I am not free ?  
Alas ! what poor defence  
Urged by a sovereign whom a slave commands !  
The shame is doubled here ;  
If well you mark their ways at whom I point :  
O beasts, false to yourselves, cruel to others,

Who see men wandering  
Naked, o'er hills and fens,  
Men from whose presence vice has fled afar ;  
And you your garments throw o'er dregs of earth.

Before the miser's face pure Virtue stands,  
Who still invites her enemies to peace ;  
A polished lure she holds,  
To entice him to her ; but it little serves ;  
For still he shuns the bait ;  
Then after various turns, and many a call,  
Such her concern for him, she throws the food ;  
But close he keeps his wings ;  
And if at length he comes, 'tis when she is gone,  
So much he seems annoyed.  
How gifts may be conferred, and yet not bring  
Praise to the benefactor,  
I wish that all should hear.  
Some by delay, some by a vain parade,  
Some by a sour brow,  
Subvert the gift, by selling it so dear,  
That he alone who buys can know the cost.  
Ask you, if gifts can wound ?  
Ay, so that the receiver  
Will after think refusal is less bitter :  
Thus does the miser wound himself and others.

Ladies, to you I have unveiled one limb  
Of a vile worthless race who court your love,  
That they may meet your scorn ;  
But more deformed is that which is concealed,  
Wherefore too foul to tell.  
In every one is gathered every vice ;  
For concord is confounded in the world.  
Love's verdant branches spring  
From blissful root, and other bliss attract,  
Like in degree of worth.  
Hear now at what conclusion I arrive ;  
Never let her believe,  
Who beauty deems a good,  
That she is loved by persons such as these ;  
If beauty we account  
Among our ills, believe it then she may,  
When brutal appetite shall love be called.  
Perish the lady who  
Her beauty shall divorce

From natural goodness, and through such a cause,  
And out of reason's garden trusts in Love.

My Song, not far from here a lady dwells,  
A native of our land,  
Fair, courteous, and discreet,  
Invoked by all, and yet divulged to none :  
When, giving her a name,  
We call on Vanna, Bianca, or Cortese ;  
To her pursue thy way, modest and veiled ;  
First stay thy course with her,  
To her first, undisguised,  
Show what thou art and wherefore sent by me,  
Then journey on wherever she commands.

~~~~~

### CANZONE XIII.

O Patria degna di trionfal fama.

LAND of my fathers, famed for glorious deeds,  
Parent of valiant sons,  
Great is thy sister's woe, far greater thine.  
He of thy sons who loves thee faithfully,  
Hearing the deeds of guilt  
In thee committed, feels both grief and shame.  
Alas ! how prompt the wicked in thee are  
To flock together and conspire thy death ;  
With dark distorted eye,  
Presenting to thy people false for true !  
Lift up the sinking hearts, and fire their blood ;  
Upon the traitor let  
Thy judgment fall ; so that in thee, with praise,  
That grace may dwell in peace, which scorns thee now,  
And is the nest and fountain of all good.

Happy thou reignedst in those halcyon days  
When all thy sons desired  
The virtues should be pillars of thy state.  
Of praise the parent, and of health the abode,  
With pure united faith,  
And with the seven ladies thou wert blessed.  
Stript of such ornaments, I see thee now  
Clothed with sorrow, and with vices filled ;

Exiled the true Fabricii.  
 O proud, and vile, the enemy of peace,  
 O Faction's mirror, how art thou dishonoured,  
 Since thou art joined with Mars !  
 The loyal thou to Antinora doomest  
 Who follows not the widowed lily's spear ;  
 And those who love thee most thou treatest worst.

Thin the malignant roots which waste thy soil ;  
 No pity show those sons  
 Who have polluted and despoiled thy flower ;  
 Will, that the virtues should be conquerors ;  
 So that the faith now hid  
 May rise again, with Justice sword in hand,  
 Steered by the beacons which Justinian gave,  
 And thy unjust, ferocious, fiery laws  
 With sound discretion mend ;  
 So that their praise be sung in earth and heaven.  
 Then with thy honours and with wealth enrich  
 Those sons who prize thee most ;  
 Nor on the undeserving heap thy gifts.  
 So that fair Prudence and her sisters may  
 All dwell with thee ; nor thou 'gainst them rebel.

Serene and glorious, by the influence blest  
 Of every heavenly sphere,  
 If such thy conduct, thou shalt honoured reign ;  
 And then thy noble name, now ill applied,  
 Florence, shall well be given.  
 Soon as with mutual love thou art adorned,  
 Happy the soul that shall be born in thee !  
 All power and praise thou shalt deserve, and be  
 The ensign of the world.  
 But if thy vessel's pilot be not changed,  
 Still mightier tempests and a stormy death  
 Expect to be thy lot,  
 And all thy course to be with wailing filled.  
 Choose then and judge, whether fraternal peace  
 Be best, or to remain a ravenous wolf.

My Song, now go thy way, severe and bold,  
 For Love is still thy guide ;  
 Enter my city, o'er whose woes I mourn ;  
 And thou shalt find some good men there, whose lamp  
 No brightness sends abroad ;  
 But vilely lost they and their virtues lie.

Exclaim : Arise, for you my trumpet sounds ;  
 Arise, take arms, raise up your abject land,  
 For wretchedly she lives ;  
 And Crassus, Simon Magus, Capaneus,  
 Aglauro, and the treacherous Greek devour her,  
 And Mahomet the blind  
 Who rules proud Pharaoh's and Jugurtha's course.  
 Then turn, and move her just ones with thy prayer,  
 So that her empire rise for evermore.

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### SESTINA I.

*Al poco giorno ed al gran cerchio d'ombra.*

At the short day, alas ! I am arrived,  
 Broad is night's shade, and white are all the hills,  
 And vanished is the colour of the herb ;  
 Yet is my love unchanged, and still is green,  
 So is it rooted in the cold hard stone  
 Which speaks and hears, as if it were a lady.

So cold and flinty is this youthful lady,  
 Who rests like snow congealed beneath the shade ;  
 For she no more is moved than is the stone,  
 By the sweet season which revives the hills,  
 Changing again their hue from white to green,  
 And robing them in flowers and the herb.

When with a garland crowned of flowering herbs,  
 From memory she draws every other lady ;  
 For crisped and mingled are the gold and green  
 So beautifully, that Love flies to their shade ;  
 And me he fetters amid gentle hills,  
 More firmly than a tower of hardest stone.

Her beauties far exceed each precious stone,  
 And wounds from her defy the healing herb ;  
 Hence have I fled amain o'er plains and hills,  
 To save me, and escape from this fair lady ;  
 But 'gainst her brightness nothing yields a shade,  
 Nor hill, nor wall, nor trees of leafy green.

Once I beheld her clad in robes of green,  
 So beautiful she might have warmed a stone,



With love, such as I bear her very shade ;  
 And in a mead adorned with brightest herb  
 I woo'd her, as a love-inspired lady,  
 Where closed around stood loftiest alpine hills.

But sooner shall the streams ascend the hills,  
 Than this fair plant, so tender and so green,  
 Shall feel a flame, beseeming gentle lady,  
 For me, who were content to sleep in stone  
 For all my days, or graze upon the herb,  
 Solely to view her garment cast a shade.

Where'er the hills send forth their deepest shade,  
 Clothed in her robe of green, the youthful lady  
 Dispers it, like a gem among the herb.

~~~~~

## SESTINA II.

*Amor mi mena tal fiata all' ombra.*

LOVE sometimes leads me to enjoy the shade  
 Of ladies, on whose necks are beauteous hills,  
 Fairer than whitest flower that decks the herb ;  
 And one there is, arrayed in robes of green,  
 Who warms my heart like light from precious stone,  
 And fairer seems than every other maid.

When mine eye gazes on this gentle maid,  
 Before whose splendour vanishes all shade,  
 Her light so wounds my heart it turns to stone ;  
 And griefs oppress me heavier than the hills.  
 Then I revive, and am in love more green  
 Than verdant Spring, or leaf, or goodliest herb.

I ween no power was ever found in herb  
 So healing as the virtue of this maid,  
 Who steals my heart, yet leaves the life-cords green ;  
 When she restores it, I am as a shade,  
 Lifeless, and cold, and barren as the hills  
 Of loftiest summit, and of driest stone.

A heart I had as hard as any stone  
 When first I saw her, like the budding herb

In Spring's sweet dawn, when flowers first deck the hills ;  
 Now is it tender toward every maid,  
 Solely through love of her, who yields a shade  
 To me more welcome than the laurel green.

For season hot, or cold or parched, or green,  
 Still brings me joy, such health this precious stone  
 Imparts, and peace from resting in her shade.  
 O sight how fair to see her press the herb,  
 Surpassing in the dance each other maid,  
 And tripping blithe as day o'er plain and hills.

Long as I dwell amid the Alps and hills  
 Love leaves me not, but still maintains more green,  
 Than man ere was most favoured by a maid ;  
 For form was never seen on precious stone,  
 Nor carved, nor painted, nor was bloom on herb,  
 Which can compare in beauty with her shade.

Thus Love contents me, living in the shade  
 Of hope to win all favour from this maid,  
 Whose garland wreathes my brow with choicest herb.

~~~~~

### SESTINA III.

Gran nobiltà mi par vedere all' ombra.

O NOBLE is the sight, when in the shade  
 Are ladies seen, with necks like snowy hills,  
 Tossing from each to each the flowery herb ;  
 If she be there for whom my love is green,  
 And fixed as firm as wall of hardest stone,  
 And stronger than was ever love for maid.

If fervent love I bear toward this maid,  
 Let no one wonder, nor his brow o'ershade ;  
 For my heart's bliss springs from this precious stone ;  
 Were it to fail me, low would sink the hills,  
 And all things change their hue, like as the green  
 Departed from the verdant new-mown herb.

Well may I say that she adorns the herb,  
 With which to adorn herself each other maid

Mingles gay flowers with the foliage green ;  
 For such the brightness of her pleasant shade,  
 That valleys are rejoiced, and plains, and hills,  
 And virtue it imparts to very stone.

I know that I should be more vile than stone,  
 If she were not my health-bestowing herb ;  
 Her virtue hath prevailed mid Alps and hills,  
 Where power was never owned of any maid,  
 Save her alone ; and happy in her shade  
 Am I, as bird among the branches green.

And were I like this humble plant and green,  
 I might show forth the worth of every stone,  
 Nor leave one virtue hidden in the shade :  
 For I am hers, her flower, and fruit, and herb ;  
 But none in works may reach this sovereign maid,  
 Whether she walk the plain or climb the hills.

I faint like him who climbs the steepest hills,  
 When forced to leave her ; and I feel the green  
 Bright Spring return seeing again this maid :  
 When far from sight of her I am a stone ;  
 But contemplate in faith, still fresh as herb,  
 That soul most pleasing in its modest shade.

My highest wish is still to enjoy the shade  
 Of her the chief of every noble maid,  
 And fairer than all flowers, or fruit, or herb.

~~~~~  
 BALLATA I.

Voi che sapete ragionar d' Amore.

YE who are able to discourse of Love,  
 Attend I pray and hear my piteous song,  
 Which tells of a disdainful lady's scorn,  
 Who by her worth hath robbed me of my heart.

Such is her scorn of all who look on her  
 That she compels the eyes to bow through fear ;  
 For round her own there plays unceasingly  
 A portraiture of every cruelty ;  
 Yet the sweet image do they bear within

Which prompts the gentle soul to say : Be kind !  
And has such virtue when it is beheld,  
That it draws forth the sighs from every heart.

She seems to say, Ne'er will I gracious be  
To any one shall look upon mine eyes ;  
For I within them bear that gentle Lord  
Who makes me feel the virtue of his darts :  
And truly I believe she guards them thus  
To view them at her pleasure and alone.  
As looks a modest lady in her mirror,  
Desirous that when seen she may be honoured.

No hope have I that she will ever deign  
From pity to bestow a glance on man,  
So cruel in her beauty is this lady,  
She who feels Love a dweller in her eyes.  
But let her hide and guard him as she will,  
That for a while I may not see such bliss,  
Yet my desires at last shall have the power  
To conquer the disdain I bear from Love:

~~~~~  
BALLATA II.

Per una ghirlandetta.

A GARLAND have I seen  
So fair, that every flower  
Will cause my sighs to flow.

Lady, I saw a garland borne by you,  
Lovely as fairest flower ;  
And blithely fluttering over it, beheld  
A little angel of Love's gentle choir,  
Who sung an artful lay,  
Which said, who me beholds  
Shall praise my sovereign lord.

Let me be found where tender floweret blooms,  
Then will my sighs break forth.  
Then shall I say, my lady fair and kind  
Bears on her head the flowerets of my Sire ;  
But to increase desire,  
Soon shall my lady come,  
Crowned by the hand of Love.

F.

Of flowers, these new and trifling rhymes of mine,  
 A ballad have composed ;  
 From them, to win a grace, they have ta'en a robe  
 That never to another hath been given :  
 Therefore let me entreat,  
 When ye shall sing the lay,  
 That ye will do it honour.

---

### BALLATA III.

*Io mi son pargoletta bella, e nova.*

LADIES, behold a maiden fair and young ;  
 To you I come, to show you in myself  
 The beauties of the place where I have been.

In heaven I dwelt, and thither shall return,  
 To impart delight to others with my beams :  
 And he who sees me and is not enamoured,  
 Shall never have intelligence of love ;  
 For every pleasing gift was freely given,  
 When Nature sought the grant of me from Him  
 Who willed that I should bear you company.

Each planet showers down upon mine eyes  
 Most bounteously its virtue and its light :  
 Beauties are mine the world hath never seen,  
 For I obtained them in the realms above ;  
 And ever must their nature rest unknown,  
 Unless to the intelligence of Him  
 In whom Love dwells to give to others bliss.

These words were written on the gentle brow  
 Of a fair angel who appeared to us ;  
 Whence I, to save myself, gazed full on her,  
 And hazarded the losing of my life ;  
 For so severe a wound I then received  
 From one whom I beheld within her eyes,  
 That ever since I weep, nor peace have known.

## BALLATA IV.

*Deh nuvoletta, che 'n ombra d'Amore.*

O CLOUD-LIKE phantom, that in Love's sweet shade  
So suddenly before these eyes appeared,  
Have pity on the heart which thou hast wounded ;  
Which hopes in thee, and in desiring dies.

Phantom divine, excelling human form,  
Thou hast implanted in my mind a fire,  
With thy discourse, which kills.  
And then, by virtue of thy fervent spirit,  
Thou hast created hope, which partly heals  
Whene'er thou smil'st on me.  
O heed not the presumption of my hope ;  
But on the love which burns me turn thine eyes ;  
For many a lady has been doomed to feel  
Another's pain, by comfort too late given.

~~~~~  
BALLATA V.

*Madonna, quel signor che voi portate.*

He whom you carry in your eyes, Madonna,  
That sovereign who the mightiest overthrows,  
Sweet confidence inspires  
That I shall find in you compassion's friend.

For where that sovereign fixes his abode,  
And is accompanied by beauty's train,  
All goodness he attracts  
Unto himself, as to the source of power :  
Hence I am ever comforting my hope,  
Which has been harassed in so many storm  
It must have suffered wreck,  
If it were not that Love  
Still gives it strength 'gainst all adversity.  
Both by his look, and by the memory  
Of the sweet place, and of the modest flower,  
Which with the glow of youth  
Engarlandeth my mind,  
Thanks lady to your gentle courtesy.

## BALLATA VI.

Donne, io non so di che mi preghi Amore.

LADIES, I know not what to ask of Love,  
For he destroys me, and I fear to die,  
And yet to feel him less I dread still more.

Within my mind a light resplendent shines  
From those fair eyes of which I am enamoured,  
That gives the soul content.  
'Tis true that there descends from time to time  
An arrow which dries up a very lake  
Ere quenched within my heart.  
Love serves me thus whenever he recalls  
The hand so sweetly soft, and faith so pure,  
Which from my life should every care remove.

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 BALLATA VII.

Poichè saziar non posso gli occhi miei.

SINCE I can never satiate mine eyes  
With looking on the beauty of Madonna,  
On her so fixed I'll gaze,  
That by beholding her I shall be blessed.

Like as the angel, who of higher worth,  
And placed in heaven's realm,  
By vision only of the Deity  
Grows blessed, so I a human creature frail,  
By gazing on the form  
Of her who holds possession of my heart,  
Shall find angelic bliss even here on earth.  
Such is the virtue which she freely sheds ;  
Yet felt alone by him  
Who pays her homage while he fondly loves.

## SONNET I.

*Parole mie, che per lo mondo siete.*

My mystic rhymes, wide-wandering through the world,  
 Ye that have had your birth since I began  
 The song for her, the lady I had wronged,  
 "Ye who, intelligent, move the third heaven,"  
 Go, seek and find her, for ye know her well,  
 Lamenting so, that she may hear our plaints:  
 Say to her: We are yours; you never then  
 Will see us more devoted than we are.  
 Stay not with her, if Love should not be there;  
 But like your elder sisters, robed in sorrow,  
 Continue on your melancholy round.  
 When ladies of true worth ye chance to find,  
 Fall at their feet with all humility,  
 Saying: Our duty is to do you honour.

## SONNET II.

*O dolci rime, che parlando andate.*

SWEET rhymes, whose theme is still the gentle lady  
 Who on all other ladies sheddeth honour,  
 To you will come, perchance ere now is come,  
 One whom you hail, and say: This is our brother.  
 O by that lord who every lady's breast  
 Enamours, I conjure you turn your ear  
 From his discourse, for in his mind there dwells  
 No sentiment which is the friend of truth.  
 And should you by his language have been moved  
 To journey to the lady whom you serve,  
 Stay not your course; but to her presence haste,  
 And say to her: Our errand is, Madonna,  
 To recommend one who in grief exclaims:  
 Ah me! Where is the desire of mine eyes?



## SONNET III.

*Per quella via che la Bellezza corre.*

ALONG that way which Beauty swiftly goes,  
 When bent to awaken Love within the mind,  
 A lady boldly speeds, in full belief  
 That surely I her captive shall be made.  
 When at the foot of that high tower arrived  
 Where all is silence when the mind consents,  
 She hears a warning voice in haste exclaim :  
 Away, fair lady, do not enter there ;  
 For she who sits aloft upon the tower,  
 When she besought the sceptre of her sway,  
 Love freely gave it her, as she desired.  
 And when the lady sees herself dismissed,  
 With firmness, from the dwelling-place of Love,  
 Blushing with shame, she silently retires.



## SONNET IV.

*Due donne in cima de la mente mia.*

Two ladies, to the summit of my mind,  
 Are come to hold discourse concerning love :  
 Virtue and courtesy adorn the one,  
 With modesty and prudence in her train ;  
 Beauty, and lively elegance, the other ;  
 And gentleness combines to do her honour :  
 And I, by favour of my gracious lord,  
 Stand at the footstool of their sovereignty.  
 Beauty and virtue both address the mind,  
 And question if a heart can truly serve  
 Two ladies, and with perfect love to each :  
 The fountain of pure eloquence replies,  
 That Beauty may be loved for her delights,  
 And Virtue may be loved for lofty deeds

## SONNET V.

*Di donne io vidi una gentile schiera.*

A GENTLE train of ladies met my view,  
 This All Saints' feast, that has but just passed by ;  
 And one advanced before them as their chief,  
 Leading with her, upon her right hand, Love.  
 She darted from her eyes a dazzling light,  
 Which seemed a glorious spirit all of fire :  
 And as emboldened on her cheer I gazed,  
 I saw depicted there an angel form.  
 Then with her eyes, benign and soft, she gave  
 A sweet salute to all who worthy were ;  
 Filling the heart of each with virtuous thoughts.  
 In heaven, I ween, was born this sovereign lady,  
 And came for our salvation to the earth :  
 Then blessed is the soul that near her dwells.

## SONNET VI.

*Onde venite, voi così pensose ?*

WHENCE do ye come, with looks so full of thought ?  
 Be pleased, in courtesy, to tell me whence ;  
 For I have fears my lady is the cause  
 Of your return, so pensive and so sad.  
 Disdain not, gentle ladies, my request ;  
 Nor for a while refuse upon your way  
 To tarry, and discourse with one in grief,  
 Who of his lady's state desires to hear.  
 Yet hearing it will add a load of pain ;  
 For Love has from his favour banished me,  
 So that his every act inflicts a wound.  
 O mark me well, how near I am consumed ;  
 For every spirit of life is prompt to fly,  
 Ladies, unless I comfort find from you.

## SONNET VII.

*Voi, donne, che pietoso atto mostrate.*

O LADIES, whose demeanour pity shows,  
 Who is this lady that lies so subdued ?  
 Can it be she whose image fills my heart ?  
 O, if it be the same, conceal it not.  
 Alas ! her features are so sadly changed,  
 So weak and so exhausted is her form,  
 That she no longer seems to represent  
 Angelic beauty in an earthly frame.  
 If thou canst not our lady recognise,  
 Who is so fallen, to me it seems not strange,  
 For even to ourselves the same occurs :  
 But if the sweet expression of her eyes  
 Thou markest, then shall she be known :  
 O weep no more, thou art indeed undone.

## SONNET VIII.

*Da quella luce che 'l suo corso gira.*

From that great planet which for ever rolls  
 Its course, at pleasure of the empyreal shrouds,  
 And midway poised, 'tween Mars and Saturn's orb,  
 Sheds influence, as the astrologer declares,  
 She who her virtue, at her pleasure, breathes  
 In me, derives the art of sovereignty ;  
 Apollo, who the fourth heaven never leaves,  
 Bestows on her the effect of my desire.  
 The beauteous star of Mercury endues  
 Her speech with soft persuasive tones ;  
 And Cynthia is not sparing of her gifts.  
 Celestial Venus, who the third heaven rules,  
 Refines her heart with all Love's eloquence ;  
 And thus by all the seven she is adorned.

## SONNET IX.

Poichè aguardando, il cor feriste in tanto.

O LOVE, since while I gazed you struck this heart  
A blow so dire, that every nerve is pained,  
In pity, lord, afford it some relief,  
So that the sorrowing spirit may revive.  
For see you not these mournful eyes consume  
In weeping, through extremity of woe,  
Which brings me to the verge of death so near  
That my escape is barred on every side.  
See lady what a load of grief I bear ;  
And hearken to my voice, how weak it is,  
With calling still for pity and your love :  
Yet if it be your pleasure, gentle lady,  
That by this grief my heart should waste away,  
Behold your servant humble and resigned.

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## SONNET X.

Dagli occhi della mia donna si muove.

FORTH from my lady's eyes there streams a light  
So gentle, that wherever she appears  
Things are beheld that may not be described ;  
Such their sublimity and nature rare.  
And by their beams upon my heart is showered  
Such fear, as makes me tremble and exclaim :  
Here will I never venture to return :  
But soon are all my resolutions lost ;  
And thither I return, again to fall ;  
Giving new courage to the timorous eyes  
That had already felt her powerful beams.  
Alas ! when there arrived, my eyes are closed,  
And the desire which leads them perisheth :  
Hence let my state, O Love, engage thy care.

## SONNET XI.

*Chi guarderà giammai senza paura.*

WHERE shall the man be found who without fear  
 Shall look upon this lovely maiden's eyes,  
 Which have so treated me, that nought remains  
 For me, save death, the thought of which is pain ?  
 Mark how my evil fortune is severe ;  
 Which from all other lives doth mine select,  
 To give mankind a warning to retire,  
 Nor risk the admiration of her form.  
 To me this fatal end hath been decreed,  
 Since it behoved one man should be destroyed  
 That others might from peril be withdrawn ;  
 And therefore have I been, alas ! as prone  
 To attract to me the opposite of life,  
 As is Diana's star to attract the sun.

## SONNET XII.

*Nulla mi parrà mai più crudel cosa.*

NOTHING more cruel can I e'er behold  
 Than her, in serving whom I waste my life ;  
 For her affections in an ice-bound lake  
 Abide, and mine in the fierce flame of Love.  
 I joy to contemplate the mighty charms  
 Of this unpitying and disdainful lady ;  
 And of my torment am enamoured so,  
 That nought beside gives pleasure to my eyes.  
 Not she who ever turns to view the sun,  
 And though transformed retains her love unchanged,  
 Endured a fortune as perverse as mine.  
 Therefore, O Love, if thou mayst not subdue  
 This haughty lady, ere life's breath expires,  
 For pity's sake, O join with me, and sigh.

## SONNET XIII.

*E' non è legno di sì forti nocchi.*

No gnarled oak was e'er so stubborn found,  
 Nor even rock so obdurately hard,  
 As she, the cruel one who hastes my death ;  
 May Love ne'er place you near her beauteous eyes !  
 If then she meet with one who shall regard her,  
 And he withdraw not, she his heart will pierce  
 And he shall surely die ; nor recompense  
 Obtain, howe'er abundant his deserts.  
 O why has so much virtue been bestowed  
 On eyes which grace a lady so unkind ;  
 Who no one faithful follower keeps alive ;  
 And who to pity is so proud a foe,  
 That if one dies for her, no more she heeds him,  
 But rather hides her beauties from his sight ?

## SONNET XIV.

*Se 'l bello aspetto non mi fosse tolto.*

WERE not the beauteous presence taken from me  
 Of that loved lady, whom to see is joy,  
 And whom I sigh for mournfully, in tears,  
 From her sweet countenance so far removed,  
 Those cares that weigh me down so heavily,  
 And make me feel such cruel martyrdom,  
 That though I breathe I scarcely am alive,  
 And am as one who has no hold of hope,  
 Would then seem light, and void of misery ;  
 But while I see her not, as I am wont,  
 Love brings affliction and my heart dismays ;  
 And of all comfort I am so bereft,  
 That things which to all others give delight,  
 To me are troubles, and a source of pain.

## SONNET XV.

*Io son sì vago della bella luce.*

THE beauteous light of those perfidious eyes,  
 By which I have been slain, enchants me so,  
 That to the place, where I meet death and scorn,  
 I still am carried by the potent charm :  
 And what distinct appears, and what confused,  
 So daze my vision, both of eye and mind,  
 That drawn away from reason and from truth,  
 Desire alone I follow as my guide ;  
 Full of undoubting faith he leads me on  
 To a sweet death, under delusion sweet,  
 Discovered only when the ill is done.  
 Strong is the grief endured by me through scorn,  
 But more, alas ! I grieve that there is seen  
 Pity with me defrauded of reward.



## SONNET XVI.

*Io maladico il dì ch'io vidi imprima.*

ACCURSED be the day when first I saw  
 The light which sparkles in your traitorous eyes ;  
 The moment cursed, when to my heart you came  
 And gained the top, to draw from it the soul.  
 Accursed be Love's labour, which my style  
 Has polished, and refined the beauteous tints  
 Of verse, for you invented and adorned,  
 To force the world to honour you for ever.  
 Accursed be my stubborn memory,  
 Which holds so firmly what must cause my death,  
 The baneful lovely image of your form ;  
 Through which, doth Love so oft forswear himself,  
 That both of us derided are by all,  
 And I, for thinking to seize Fortune's wheel.

## SONNET XVII.

*Se vedi gli occhi miei di pianger vaghi.*

If thou behold these eyes, that love to weep  
 O'er a new woe, that melts my heart to pity ;  
 I pray thee, Lord, by her who leaves thee not,  
 To disenamour them of such a pleasure.  
 Make thy right hand a scourge, and him repay  
 Who justice kills, and then protection finds  
 From the great tyrant, feasting on his gall,  
 Which wide is spread, and threats to flood the world ;  
 Tyrant, who o'er thy faithful followers' hearts  
 Scatters such icy dread, that all are mute.  
 But thou, O light of heaven, fire of Love,  
 Revive the virtuous spirit, which now lies  
 Naked and cold, and clothe it with thy veil ;  
 For without it there is no peace on earth.

## SONNET XVIII.

*Poich' io non trovo chi meco ragioni.*

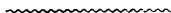
SINCE I find none with whom I may converse  
 Of him, the sovereign whom we both obey,  
 Thus must I satisfy the strong desire  
 To give expression to my honest thoughts.  
 The long and painful silence I have held  
 Towards you, my friend, hath had no other cause  
 But this bad place, where vice is so supreme  
 That goodness finds no welcome or abode.  
 No lady is there on whose face Love smiles,  
 Nor even man who ever sighs for Love ;  
 And if there were, a fool he would be called.  
 Alas, friend Cino, how the times are changed  
 To our sad loss, how changed our pleasant lays,  
 Since goodness makes us a return so scant !



## SONNET XIX.

*Io mi credea del tutto esser partito.*

I THOUGHT, friend Cino, that these rhymes of yours  
 And I had separated, and for ever ;  
 For now my vessel is required to steer  
 An altered course, and further from the shore :  
 But since I many times have heard that you  
 Are caught with ease by every baited hook,  
 Be pleased to let thy wearied ear attend  
 A little to this counsel of my pen.  
 He who like you is readily enamoured,  
 And is by each new beauty chained and freed,  
 Shows that Love's arrow lightly touches him :  
 If then your heart so pliant is and fickle,  
 Correct it, I beseech you, in God's name ;  
 And let your deeds and your sweet words accord.



## SONNET XX.

*Togliete via le vostre porte ormai.*

UNBARRED be all your gates, and opened wide,  
 And she who honours others shall come in ;  
 For this the lady is, in whom worth dwells,  
 And who in valour mighty is, and power.  
 " Woe's me, alas ! woe's me," tell me thy grief ?  
 " I tremble so that I want power to speak."  
 Be comforted ; for me thou still shalt find,  
 Thy succour and thy life, as thou shalt own.  
 " I feel that all my faculties are bound  
 By a hidden spell, O Love, which drags me on ;  
 And I perceive that it forebodes me woe."  
 Turn thee to me, who fulness am of joy ;  
 By fleeing only thou receivest thy wounds,  
 And doubt not they shall quickly be removed.

## SONNET XXI.

Guido, vorrei che tu, e Lappo, ed io.

GUIDO, I would that Lappo, thou, and I,  
 Were carried by some sweet enchantment hence,  
 And placed within a bark upon the sea,  
 Where wind and wave our bidding should obey ;  
 Where never storm, or other adverse weather,  
 To interrupt our course should have the power ;  
 But wishes ne'er to part should still increase  
 By ever living in one mind together.  
 And might the good enchanter set beside us,  
 Our Beatrice, and Vanna, and the lady  
 Whose place in beauty's list is number thirty ;  
 And there, discoursing ever upon love,  
 I trust that each of them would be content,  
 As I am confident that we should be.



## SONNET XXII.

Lo re che merta i suoi servi a ristoro.

THE King of Kings whose goodness knows no bounds,  
 In recompensing ills his servants bear,  
 Makes me discard all anger, care, and grief,  
 And to the court of heaven direct mine eyes.  
 And while I muse upon the glorious choir  
 Of citizens, who dwell where all is pure,  
 In praising my Creator, I his creature  
 Am more inflamed with love the more I praise,  
 For if I contemplate the promised bliss,  
 To which my God invites the Christian race,  
 For me there seems nought else to be desired.  
 But, friend beloved, for thee I truly grieve,  
 Who disregard'st the life and world to come,  
 And lovest for a shadow bliss secure.

## THE CANZONIERE OF DANTE.

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### PART II.

#### CANZONE XIV.

Ahi faulx ris ! per qe traï haves.

AH sourir faux, pourquoi trahissiez vous  
Oculus meos ? et quid tibi feci,  
That thou with fraud so cruel hast repaid me ?  
Jam audissent verba mea Græci.  
Chacun le sait, et vous ne l'ignorez,  
That a deceiver cannot merit praise.  
Thou know'st if joy attend  
Miserum ejus cor, qui præstolatur,  
En vain j'espère, elle ne s'en soucie guère.  
Oh Dieu ! que de malheur,  
Atque fortuna ruinosâ datur  
To him who wastes time in expectancy,  
Nor ever touches even the bud of hope.

Conqueror, cor suave, de te primo ;  
Since, for a mad indulgence of the eyes,  
Vous ne deviez perdre la loi de raison ;  
But I am pleased to see that in the strife  
Semper insurgunt contra me de limo.  
Je meurs donc pour la foi que j'eus en toi,  
Penser fatal ! Ah pauvre moi !  
For I am punished, and have done no wrong.  
Nec dicit ipsa : Malum est de isto ;  
Unde querelam sisto.  
Full well she knows whether my heart inclines ;  
De plaire à d'autres, parce qu'Amour le sait,  
Que le faux cœur grande peine en porterait.

Truly this lady's heart must be of ice,  
 Et si dur, que par ma foi et mon sort,  
 Nisi pietatem habuerit servo,  
 Amour, tu sais, si je ne trouve secours,  
 That I must die for her a woeful death,  
 Neque plus vitam sperando conseruo.  
 Vae, omni meo nervo !  
 Si elle ne fait, que par sa pitié,  
 I may again behold her face with joy :  
 Oh heaven ! how great its purity !  
 Mais j'en doute, et grande peine j'en ai !  
 Amorem versus me non tantum eurat,  
 Quantum spes in me de ipsa durat.

Chanson, vous pourrez aller par tout le monde,  
 Namque locutus sum in lingua trina,  
 Ut gravis mea spina  
 The world may know, and every man may feel :  
 Perchance, she who torments may pity me.



## CANZONE XV.

L'uom che conosce è degno ch'aggia ardire.

THE man of knowledge may be wisely bold,  
 And dare to hazard, when he safety seeks  
 'Gainst what may fear excite,  
 Whether from natural or other cause.  
 Thus I resume my song, and will assert  
 It was not boldness made me give my thoughts  
 Unto this creature fair,  
 When I beheld the foe who came to wound me :  
 For never till that day had I seen Love,  
 Who is unknown to hearts that feel him not.  
 At first he seems a saving spirit of health,  
 Through power of whom celestial bliss is given ;  
 Then speedily withdraws,  
 Prepared to strike with an unerring dart  
 The moment a sweet look and he have joined.

Soon as the eyes on beauty fondly turn,  
 And find its pleasure, they awake the mind ;  
 Both heart and soul are moved,

And they contemplate each peculiar charm ;  
 Whilst every wish departs save still to gaze :  
 Then if look joins with look in sympathy,  
 The burning heart is pierced  
 Swiftly by Love, who seems of brightness born :  
 Thus was I wounded while I gazed on her ;  
 Then trembling, backward turned, and sighing said :  
 Ne'er must I look again,  
 Though never from my thrall can I escape :  
 For at the thought alone  
 I tremble, and am pale, and icy cold,  
 Signs whence I know the heart is quite destroyed.

Further, to show that boldness it was not,  
 Through which I risked the heart to gaze on her,  
 I can declare that then  
 Pity into my eyes directly came ;  
 And o'er my countenance a semblance spread  
 Which from the heart proceeds, when life has borne  
 Such suffering that 'tis lost,  
 Because for it no succour was in store :  
 This pity comes obeying Nature's will,  
 And shows by outward signs, the heart distressed,  
 That mercy it may find ;  
 For which a prayer is offered, as behoves,  
 To where is never known  
 The force of weapons, or of any lord  
 Whose duty is to succour him who dies.

My song, thy reasoning may be heard, but few  
 Will understand thee, so as to approve ;  
 Save the enamoured soul,  
 And gentle heart where Love has fixed his home.  
 Hence thou art well prepared with whom to abide,  
 And whither go, that thou may'st honoured be.  
 When narrowly observed,  
 Be not alarmed, but thy opinion hold ;  
 For courtesy and reason make thee safe.  
 Take then thy way through bright and open paths ;  
 To every one be humble, courteous, kind ;  
 Choose any designation that thou wilt ;  
 And say thou art a tale  
 Told by the wretched heart of one who saw  
 That sovereign who his fond beholder alays.

## CANZONE XVI.

Perchè nel tempo rio.

SINCE here in evil days

I live, in expectation of still worse,  
 I know not how to hope  
 For consolation ever, if the aid  
 Of heaven relieve me not,  
 In sending death ; for which I do implore.  
 But wretches, such as I,  
 Are ever scorned, as now I see and prove.  
 Of her I will not plain who causes this ;  
 Since peace I yet expect  
 From her, when my last hour of life arrives ;  
 Because, alas ! I trust  
 To serve her by my death,  
 Whom living I but injure and displease.

O would that I by Love

Had instantly been slain when first I saw him !  
 For blame of such a wrong  
 Would then have honour brought to her and me :  
 Such is the shame I feel  
 Of this my life, which will not quickly die,  
 That it is worse to bear  
 Than is my woe, which frights Love's followers :  
 For Love is one thing, Fortune is another,  
 Which nature overrules ;  
 The one by habit, and by force the other,  
 And me they both controul ;  
 Whence, as a smaller ill,  
 I nature's will oppose and wish to die.

This my unnatural wish

Has strength so great, that many times I would,  
 Swayed by another's power,  
 Inflict death's lighter blow upon my heart ;  
 But pity of the soul,  
 Alas ! lest it should perish, nor return  
 To God the same it was,  
 Lets it not die ; but heavily it mourns :  
 Not that I deem it possible to hold  
 My purpose to the end,

So that excess of woe may not prevail  
 Over compassion new :  
 Haply the mighty lord  
 Who views this wretched state may pity me.

My Song, I shall detain thee with me here,  
 That I may weep with thee ;  
 For I have no safe refuge where to go :  
 Compared with what I feel  
 All other pain is joy.  
 I would not thou shouldst any one offend.

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### CANZONE XVII.

*Poesia ch' i' ho perduta ogni speranza.*

SINCE every hope is lost of my return  
 To you, Madonna, nothing now remains,  
 Nor ever can arrive,  
 To bring alleviation to my grief.  
 Hope there is none that I shall more behold  
 Your countenance, for fortune has cut off  
 The way by which alone  
 I could return to your exalted worth.  
 Hence is my lonely heart so sorrowful  
 That I consume in weeping and in sighs :  
 And I am grieved to endure  
 So long, that death hath not extinguished life.  
 Ah me ! What shall I do, my love still grows,  
 And hope falls off from me on every side.  
 I see not in what robe  
 To wrap myself, for everything torments ;  
 Unless, to kill me I should call on death,  
 And every spirit loudly joins my cry.

That hope which at far distance made me leave  
 Thy presence, which delighteth more and more,  
 Hath cruelly deceived me,  
 Through death, the enemy of all that 's good ;  
 For love, which had conferred all gifts on you,  
 Had promised to console my cares in peace :  
 With counsel strong and true,  
 He healed the destitute and wretched mind,

And urged it to a toil of pure delight :  
 In quest of honour made me part from you ;  
 Filled with desire to win  
 Esteem, and higher rank at my return.  
 A prince I served, of whom if man shall say  
 A better sovereign ever was on earth,  
 He vouches not the truth ;  
 For never was there one so wisely brave,  
 So bounteous, prudent, temperate, and firm,  
 And just, beyond all men that ever died.

This sovereign, by the hand of Justice formed,  
 Elected for his worth from all mankind,  
 More nobly exercised  
 Greatness of mind than ever prince before.  
 He never bowed to avarice nor pride,  
 And even in adversity grew strong ;  
 For magnanimity  
 Made him stand firm, whoever might assail.  
 Then reason and good-will just motives were  
 That I should serve a sovereign so beloved.  
 And if his foes have sinned,  
 Who harmed him to the utmost of their power,  
 Duty forbade that I should aid their wrong.  
 Shunning his opposite, to him I came ;  
 Nor ever shall repent ;  
 Though death hath turned the sweet to bitterness :  
 For good is to be done because 'tis good ;  
 And who does what becomes him cannot err.

There are who rest their honour and esteem  
 On gifts alone which they to Nature owe ;  
 Whence these with little care  
 Pursue, as seems to me, the path of life ;  
 For 'tis not other's gifts can deck the breast ;  
 Except the honour man may gain by deeds  
 Performed in rectitude ;  
 This is his own, and pleasing is the work.  
 What glory then was raised, and brought to nought,  
 By death of such a prince, so loved and prized.  
 Not fancy's lofty flight,  
 Nor judgment sound, nor truth beholds his like.  
 Oh saintly soul, now raised to highest heaven,  
 Thy subjects and thy foes should weep o'er thee ;  
 And if this world were ruled  
 By men of virtue and of noble hearts,



He who hath erred 'gainst thee would weep his fault,  
And all thy followers weep to be alive.

I weep that I still live ; for thou art dead,  
My sovereign, whom I loved more than myself,  
And by whose aid I hoped  
To be restored where I should rest content.  
And now, bereft of every cheering hope,  
My life, beyond all else, is burdensome.  
Oh guilty, cruel death !  
How hast thou robbed me of the sweet intent,  
To view again the loveliest countenance  
That nature's mighty power ever formed  
In lady of high worth,  
Whose beauty is the plenitude of virtue.  
This hast thou robbed me of, whence such my pain  
That never was there grief of heart so deep  
As my far absence brings.  
Safety while life remains is past my hope,  
For he is dead, and I am not restored,  
And hence I languish living in despair.

My song, to fair Etruria straight depart,  
Unto the land of pleasure most refined ;  
And, at thy journey's end,  
Relate in plaintive notes my torturing grief.  
But ere thou leavest the rich Lunigian lands,  
Fail not to find the Marquis Franceschino ;  
And with sweet eloquence  
Tell him, that still in him I place some hope ;  
Tell him, how distance is consuming me,  
And pray him that he send me his reply.

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### CANZONE XVIII.

*Io non posso celar il mio dolore.*

I AM unable to conceal my grief,  
Hence must my outward aspect mourn,  
As the soul does within its dwelling place ;  
For when Love took his station in my heart,  
He stood before me and suggested thoughts  
Unto my mind which since have seldom slept ;

But oft have added strength unto my flame,  
 By converse on the griefs to which they are heirs,  
 With those unhappy sighs,  
 Disconsolate, which flow so copiously  
 That they exhaust my powers,  
 And cause a trembling as they hurry forth,  
 When Love recalls the memory of Madonna.

Imagination filled with sorrow wounds me,  
 Picturing before me every torturing ill  
 That I must suffer while my life endures.  
 My nature is distracted and assailed  
 By Death, whom I behold where'er I turn,  
 And the soul longs to bear him company ;  
 For Love hath cruelly contrived to wound  
 My heart in such a way that it hath died ;  
 Nor left the soul a wish  
 That ever can afford it consolation ;  
 For when I looked around,  
 I saw my lady, who compassion slew,  
 And Death then placed himself within my eyes.

By an effect attendant on the strife  
 Of Love, nature is conquered, and I find  
 My virtue helpless and discomfited.  
 A colouring new into my darkened visage  
 Enters, and from my eyes the tears are thrown.  
 The soul desires to pass to another's reign.  
 Alas ! perceiving this, I oft become  
 The perfect likeness of a person dead ;  
 Weeping, that death should be  
 The only comfort offered to the mind ;  
 For nature's dictates still,  
 And reason's too, said I should grieve to die ;  
 Yet in that grief I seemed to feel a joy.

At times, when confidence the mind resumes,  
 Madonna takes possession of my thoughts ;  
 Then instantly the sighs begin to flow ;  
 Love is awakened, and exclaims aloud :  
 O fly, my Spirits all, behold the lady  
 Through whom you must be pained in every limb.  
 The Spirits all obey and fly in terror.  
 He who should hear from one who had escaped  
 His tale of miseries,  
 How they remain in life companionless,

Surely he could not have  
 A heart so cruel but he then must weep  
 Remembering that I am a human creature.

My song, I have composed thee of tears,  
 And in my sorrowing soul inscribed thee ;  
 With her and with the mind thou shalt depart ;  
 There shalt thou be disconsolate and sad ;  
 And places shun of mirth and revelry,  
 Discordant to the tenor of thy words.  
 If gentle heart should read thee, him entreat,  
 That to the lady by whose mighty worth  
 Love has o'erpowered me,  
 He lead thee faithfully ; so that she hear  
 Thy words, nor take offence.  
 At my name's sound thou wilt perceive if she  
 Be kind, who wars against my wretched heart.

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### CANZONE XIX.

*Giovene donna dentro al cor mi siede.*

A LADY young and fair dwells in my heart,  
 And such the perfect beauty she displays,  
 That if I have not aid,  
 I shall attempt in vain to paint the charms  
 Which the enamoured spirits see, and whom  
 This their new life delights ;  
 For all their virtue hath towards her fled,  
 So that I find myself bereft of power  
 By their desertion, which afflicts yet soothes.  
 Then succour I implore  
 From him who in her bright, pure, face appeared,  
 When I was captured through my fixed regard.

Calm in the centre dwells that lady, fair,  
 Noble, with graceful modesty adorned,  
 And therefore brighter shines.  
 The soul sits humbly at her feet, and love  
 So fills it, that it contemplates but her ;  
 Nor other thing regards ;  
 And when inflamed, through the excess of pleasure,  
 Her beauteous eyes are raised with tenderness,

Her well beloved handmaid to console ;  
From them are sent the dart,  
Sparkling and cruel, which had stricken me,  
Soon as I first became her prisoner.

Desire unbridled then in vigour grew  
Incessantly, nor ever wearied seemed,  
Until it brought me to the bourne  
Where it is turned to bitterness and sighs ;  
And I, while yet alive, am pale and wan,  
And like a person dead ;  
And if perchance some comfort I derive  
From recollection of that angel face,  
Yet it restores not confidence and ease ;  
Fear still possesses me ;  
For victory itself is scarcely gain,  
When something in the spoil produces sorrow.

Nobly, upon her splendid throne she shines,  
And there commands with dignity and grace,  
Becoming her who rules.  
Then Love concentrates in her mind his power,  
And smiles exulting in the blissful reign  
Which she adorns and holds ;  
So that the thoughts, which dwell on fleeting hope,  
Reflecting on her eminence so proud,  
Together crowd and anxiously debate ;  
And thence a picture springs,  
Of fancy born, which wastes me and unnerves,  
Thinking that she so meek may prove unkind.

Thus good and evil meet in me conjoined ;  
For reason, which the simple truth requires,  
With such fate is content ;  
And is converted to a natural sense :  
For he on whom affliction falls still grieves,  
And ever will lament :  
And to whichever side I turn my thoughts,  
My judgment is distracted more and more,  
Nor ever, I believe, will fixed become.  
But yet I call myself  
A lover, subject to a face benign,  
And if of that deprived no joy can know.

Haste thee, my song, I pray thee, go thy way  
To those will give to thee a willing ear ;

And should they stop thee to discourse with them ;  
 Tell them I feel secure,  
 Nor from discovery danger apprehend,  
 For subtle is my veil and dark my robe.

~~~~~

CANZONE XX.

*Io non pensava che lo cor giammai.*

I NEVER thought that sighs could such distress  
 Bring to the heart, and torture so severe,  
 That from my soul the tear would have its birth,  
 And to all eyes my face exhibit death.  
 Peace have I never known, nor even a smile,  
 Since with Madonna I first met, and Love,  
 Who said to me : Never wilt thou escape ;  
 For power in this lady is too strong.  
 My courage then disconsolate departed,  
 And left the heart to bear  
 The battle's hazard, where Madonna dwelled ;  
 Who from her eyes shot forth such fatal darts,  
 That Love prevailed, and all  
 My spirits routed and compelled to fly.

All skill must fail this lady to describe ;  
 For with such varied beauties she is adorned,  
 That earthly mind wants power to bear her light,  
 So that our intellect may know her worth :  
 So gentle is she, that with thought of her,  
 I feel the soul tremble within the heart ;  
 As if about to sink under the pain  
 That in her sight I never fail to show.  
 The brightness of her eyes inflicts such wounds,  
 That he who sees me says :  
 Regard'st thou not this piteous object here,  
 Who wears the semblance of a person dead,  
 Claiming our charity ?  
 And yet Madonna heeds not my distress.

When by a thought possessed, which fain would tell  
 Of her great worth to every gentle heart,  
 I find myself endued with grace so small,  
 That in the thought I dare not persevere :  
 For Love, whene'er her beauties are in view,

Alarms me so, that hearing her approach  
 The heart is overcome, dejected, and then  
 Love sighing says : Of thee I now despair ;  
 For from the quiver of her tender smile  
 I drew a sharpened dart,  
 Which has transfix'd thy heart, and parted mine.  
 O Love, thou knowest that then I said to thee :  
 Since I have seen Madonna,  
 It is decreed that thou, my heart, must die.

My song, thou know'st that from the lips of Love  
 I gathered thee, when I beheld Madonna ;  
 Therefore be pleased to win my confidence :  
 Go in such guise that she may list to thee ;  
 And humbly pray that thou may'st guide to her  
 The spirits, which were driven from my heart  
 By her excess of worth, and would be lost  
 Infallibly, should they not change their course :  
 Forlorn and unaccompanied they go,  
 Through ways of bitterness and dire distrust ;  
 Oh lead them back through ways of confidence :  
 Then say to her, when in her presence come,  
 These spirits represent  
 One who is sad, and dying full of fear.

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### CANZONE XXI.

*L'alta speranza che mi reca amore.*

- \* THE exalted hope awakened by the love  
 Of one, a gentle lady whom I have seen,  
 With salutation sweetly greets my soul,  
 And makes it bound with joy within the heart ;  
 Hence is it strangely changed from what it was,  
 And tells a novel tale,  
 As if it were returned from distant land ;  
 Tells how that lady is with meekness filled,  
 Is courteous and humane,  
 And in the arms of pity softly rests.

Such sighs this tale calls forth that I remain  
 Alone, that they may reach no other ear ;  
 And then I listen to Madonna's praise  
 From Love, who makes me live beneath his star

The gentle sovereign says : This spirit of health,  
 In praising, I will call  
 By every name that gentle virtue owns ;  
 For in adorning her all virtues join,  
 All are in her encreased,  
 And all in generous emulation strive.

What she resembles he alone can tell,  
 Or know, whose dwelling is in heaven above ;  
 For envious of her no heart can be ;  
 A miracle no envy can excite ;  
 That vice can only reign where rivals are ;  
 But she unrivalled is,  
 And I no type of her can give of her excelling.  
 Her gracious spirit descends into the heart  
 Of him who looks on her,  
 And suffers nought defective there to stay.

So great her virtue and her mental worth  
 She raises admiration in the sun ;  
 And to obey and please the Will Divine,  
 The knee is bent to her with reverence.  
 If then Supreme Intelligence can deign  
 To exalt and honour her,  
 How great must be the honour man should pay !  
 All that is gentle is of her enamoured ;  
 In her the air rejoices,  
 And heaven its sweetness showers where she dwells.

I am as one who listens, and desires  
 The joy of seeing her, and oft I sigh ;  
 For when I search into my inmost thoughts,  
 I find she is the mistress of my soul :  
 With this Love gladdens me, and makes me feel  
 Humility and pride :  
 For I am her's who is all gentleness ;  
 And all whose words are gifts of life and peace ;  
 Whose wisdom sees so clear,  
 That she of everything unveils the truth.

Her form dwells in my mind as when I saw  
 Her sweet expression and humility ;  
 Whence Love derives a hope with which he feeds  
 The heart, and bids it rest in confidence :  
 My whole delight is founded on this hope ;  
 Such is her nobleness

That merely seeing her creates the hope,  
 And courage gives to own it openly :  
 Hence have I no delight  
 But to see her who is my life's repose.

Thou seem'st to me so new and fair, my Song,  
 That I may hardly dare to call thee mine.  
 Say that Love made thee, if the truth were told,  
 And wrote thee in my heart, which owns his sway.  
 He wills, that only in his name thou go,  
 To those who perfectly  
 Are his, although the number be but few ;  
 Thus shalt thou say : I come to stay with you,  
 And pray ye welcome me,  
 In reverence of the lord by whom I am sent.

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### CANZONE XXII.

*La bella stella che 'l tempo misura.*

THE star so beautiful which measures time,  
 The lady seems, who hath enamoured me,  
 Set in the heaven of Love ;  
 And as the glorious presence of the star,  
 From day to day illuminates the world,  
 So she the heart of those  
 Who gentle are and valorous, illumines  
 With light which in her countenance abides.  
 And all men honour her,  
 For they behold in her that perfect light,  
 Which fullness brings of virtue to the mind  
 Of him who of her beauty is enamoured.  
 'Tis this which gilds that heaven  
 With light that is a guide unto the good,  
 Shining with splendour by her beauty shed.

This lady, far more fair than I can paint,  
 Have I departed from, impressed with love  
 Great as her worth demands ;  
 And pictured in my mind I bear her looks ;  
 Whence spring the tears of sorrow that these eyes  
 Abundantly let fall.  
 O lovely lady, star that I should see  
 If I were there whence I am forced away !



In sorrow and alarm,  
 The weeping heart within itself exclaims.  
 More beauteous is her image in my mind  
 Than ever by my language can be told ;  
 For I ungifted am  
 Of intellect to speak of things so high,  
 Nor even my woe can perfectly relate.

From her doth every thought of mine proceed ;  
 For from her lovely person hath my soul  
 Imbibed its quality ;  
 And meditation of her beauty brings  
 A strong desire to see her, which excites  
 My will to love her more ;  
 Nor ever leaves me, but without repose  
 Compels me to exclaim incessantly :  
 Alas ! I dare not die ;  
 And life I spend in sorrow and in tears.  
 And though my grief I cannot fully show,  
 I will not therefore keep it quite concealed ;  
 For I shall pity raise  
 In all who of my sovereign own the sway,  
 Though I should tell but part of what I feel.

Back to my mind returns each smallest thing  
 That I have ever chanced to see her do,  
 Or ever heard her say.  
 Rest I have none ; but languish as a man  
 Whose weary life is wasting more and more  
 In feebleness and tears.  
 Through her from everything I suffer pain ;  
 For if in her I have compassion found,  
 And have forsaken her,  
 Stronger the reason is that I should grieve :  
 And if remembrance pictures her to seem  
 Displeased toward me, and with features dark,  
 Or fond expression gone,  
 I feel again as when I have seen her thus,  
 And bitter tears are more disposed to flow.

My life enamoured evermore pursues  
 The strong desire which draws me to Madonna ;  
 Nor obstacle regards.  
 And the full tear, in which I melt away,  
 To greater size is swollen, if my looks chance  
 To attract fair lady's eye ;

And what I then become I could not tell ;  
 For well do I remember how I saw  
 Madonna sometimes look ;  
 And her loved image, which within me dwells,  
 Starts up with force so fearful that I die :  
 Hence of my state nought further can I say.  
 Alas ! I would not wish  
 To find the being who shall comfort me,  
 Until her lovely eyes shall be my guide.

Thou art not beautiful, my new-born song ;  
 But thou art piteous, and shalt go thy way,  
 Where peradventure thou  
 Shalt make Madonna listen to thy strain.  
 With reverence address her and with fear :  
 Then after salutation, say to her,  
 That I can never hope  
 To see her more, before my days shall end :  
 For life I do not think will last so long.

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### CANZONE XXIII.

*Dacchè ti piace, Amore, ch'io ritorni.*

Love, since it pleases thee that I return  
 Under the rod usurped  
 Of her whose beauty and whose pride thou knowest,  
 O now enlighten and adorn her heart  
 With thy enamouring ray,  
 Nor let her joy for ever in my moans,  
 And if thou first wilt hear  
 Our recent peace, and my devouring flame,  
 The scorn unmerited which tortured me,  
 And all my reason for invoking death,  
 Thou wilt be full informed ;  
 Then if thou kill me, and such be thy will,  
 With mind unburdened I shall die less grieved.

Thou knowest, my lord, full well that I was made  
 By thee of temper apt  
 To serve thee, but as yet had felt no wound,  
 When under heaven I saw the face unveiled  
 By which I am enthralled ;

Whose charm the tender spirits felt, and ran  
Impatient to Madonna.  
That graceful being, whose surpassing worth  
Enamours her with beauty of herself,  
Promised them speedily a safe retreat ;  
Then they confide in her ;  
Nor sooner were they clasped in her robe,  
Than she converted their sweet peace to tears.

I, who the sorrow shared of those who mourned,  
By kind affection led,  
Oft hastened to the presence of Madonna ;  
The soul that should be bold when truth requires,  
Assisted me with strength  
To look with steady gaze upon her eyes.  
Thou must remember it ;  
For thou didst call to me, with look so soft,  
That from my heaviest load I hoped relief ;  
Nor sooner had she turned my prison's key,  
Than with benign regret  
Thou pitiedst me, and showedst such kind concern,  
That I, amid my torment burned with joy.

Won by her gentle aspect, bright and lovely,  
I was her subject true ;  
And her deportment met my utmost wish ;  
My glory was to serve a thing so noble :  
All my most fond delights  
I left to gaze upon that shining star :  
Yes, but her cruel scorn,  
That which alone was wanting to consume me,  
Covered the meekness of her noble features :  
Hence flew the arrow down into my side  
Which gave a living death ;  
And she rejoicing looked upon my pain ;  
Solely to prove if help might come from thee.

Alas ! enamoured thus, and quite subdued,  
Death fondly I desired,  
From other torment as it were to flee ;  
For sorrow had so crushed and weakened me,  
Beyond the lot of man,  
That every sigh I thought must be my last.  
Yet ardency of love  
Constrained me so to suffer, that I fell  
Half dead through bitter anguish on the earth ;

And to my fancy came a voice, which said,  
That in this cruel strife  
It was decreed by fate that I must die ;  
So that I shrunk from love through excess of fear.

My sovereign thou hast heard  
The life I have endured in being thine ;  
Not that I tell thee this rebelliously,  
No, thy commands I ever shall obey :  
Yet in this enterprise,  
If I shall die, and thou abandon me,  
I pray at least that thou mayest pardon her.

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#### CANZONE XXIV.

*Io miro i crespi e gli blondi capegli.*

I GAZE upon those crisped and flaxen locks,  
Of which with string of pearl or fairest flower,  
Love hath contrived a net to capture me ;  
And I discover that the lure succeeds.  
And first, I look into those lovely eyes,  
Which pass through mine, and penetrate the heart,  
With beams so animating and so bright,  
That from the sun itself they seem to flow.  
Virtue still growing is in them displayed ;  
Hence I, who contemplate their gracefulness,  
Thus commune with myself amid my sighs :  
Alas ! why am I not  
Alone, with only her, where I would wish !  
So that with those fair tresses I might play,  
And part them wave by wave ;  
And of her beauteous eyes, which shine supreme,  
Might form two mirrors for delight of mine.

Then I the fair and lovely mouth survey,  
The spacious forehead, and the enamouring look,  
The fingers white, the nose correctly straight,  
The eyebrow smooth and dark, that pencilled seems.  
Then wandering thought imagination stirs,  
Saying : Observe the winning grace and joy  
Within that delicate and vermeil lip ;  
Where all that's sweet appears and yields delight.

O listen to the charms of her discourse,  
What tenderness and goodness it reveals,  
How skilfully her reasoning is arranged :  
Admire, how when she smiles,  
All other sights in sweetness are surpassed :  
Thus does my fancy, thinking of that mouth,  
So urge me on, that I  
Have not on earth the thing I would not give,  
To obtain from it one unreluctant yes.

Then I regard her white and flexile throat,  
So aptly joined to shoulders and to breast ;  
And little rounded chin, with dimple stamped,  
Fairer than which mine eyes cannot design ;  
And thought, whose flight I ever turn to her,  
Says to me : Contemplate the sweet delight,  
To clasp within the arms that lovely neck,  
And on that throat a tender seal impress.  
Then adds : Now give imagination wing ;  
Think, if the outward features are so fair,  
What must the others seem she hides and veils ?  
The glorious works we view  
Displayed in heaven, the sun and the other stars,  
Alone persuade us Paradise is there ;  
So, if on her thou gaze,  
Thou must believe that every earthly bliss  
Is found where eye is not allowed to pierce.

I then observe her arms, full, round, and long ;  
Her hand, white, tender, smooth, and soft as down ;  
Her fingers, long and delicately slight,  
Proud of the ring which one of them enclasps ;  
And my thought says to me : If thou wert now  
Within those arms, thy life would pleasure know,  
When shared with her, which aptly to describe,  
In least degree, exceeds my utmost skill.  
Observe, how every limb a picture seems ;  
In size and beauty suited to her frame ;  
And coloured with angelic hue of pearl ;  
Grace is in every look,  
And just disdain when circumstance demands :  
Humble and bashful, temperately gay,  
To virtue ever dear,  
O'er all her noble manners reigns a charm  
Which universal reverence inspires.

Stately and soft she moves as Juno's bird ;  
 Erect and firmly poised as any crane.  
 One charm remark, peculiarly her own,  
 The utmost grace with modesty combined ;  
 And wouldst thou see a lively proof of it,  
 Says thought to me, observe her in thy mind,  
 When with a lady, elegant and fair,  
 In sweet companionship she moves along ;  
 Then as the brightest stars seem chased away  
 By greater brightness of the advancing sun,  
 So vanish other charms when hers appear.  
 Think now, how she must please,  
 Whose loveliness and beauty are as one ;  
 And beauty past compare in her is found.  
 What pleases her alone  
 Is virtue, and the habits of the noble ;  
 But on her own fair deeds she rests her hope.

My song, thou boldly mayst assert for truth,  
 That since on earth was beauteous lady born,  
 No one hath ever pleased  
 So universally as this one doth ;  
 For joined in her is found  
 Beauty of form and goodness of the soul ;  
 Nor wanting in her—but some grains of pity.

~~~~~

### CANZONE XXV.

Oimè lasso ! quelle trecce blonde.

FAREWELL, alas ! farewell those tresses bright,  
 From whence the hills around  
 Drew and reflected tints of shining gold ;  
 Farewell the beauteous cheer, and glances sweet,  
 Implanted in my heart  
 By those fair eyes on that thrice happy day ;  
 Farewell the graceful bloom  
 Of sparkling countenance ;  
 Farewell the soft sweet smile,  
 Disclosing pearls of snowy white, between  
 Roses of vermeil hue, throughout the year ;  
 Why without me, O Death,  
 These hast thou carried off in beauty's spring !

Farewell the endearing mirth, and wise reserve,  
 The welcome frank and sweet ;  
 The prudent mind, and well directed heart ;  
 Farewell the beautiful, meek, proud disdain,  
 Which strengthened my resolve  
 All baseness to detest, and greatness love.  
 Farewell desire, the child  
 Of beauty so abounding ;  
 Farewell the aspiring hope,  
 Which every other made me leave behind,  
 And rendered light to me Love's heaviest load ;  
 These hast thou broken, Death,  
 As glass, and me to living death exposed.

Lady, farewell ! Of every virtue queen,  
 Goddess, for whom, through Love,  
 I have refused all others to adore :  
 Farewell ! what column, of what precious stone  
 On earth were worthy found  
 To build thy fane, and lift thee high in air ?  
 Farewell ! thou vessel filled  
 With nature's miracles.  
 By fortune's evil turn  
 High on the rugged mountains thou wast led,  
 Where death has closed thee in the cruel tomb ;  
 And of my eyes hath formed  
 Two fountains wearied with incessant tears.

Farewell ! and O unpardonable Death,  
 Pity these sorrowing eyes, and own at least,  
 That till thy hand destroy me,  
 Endless should be my cry, Alas ! Farewell !

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### BALLATA VIII.

Fresca rosa novella.

FRESH, young, and blooming rose,  
 Delight inspiring Spring,  
 Along the meads and streams,  
 In gay notes carolling,  
 Your charms I sing throughout the verdant groves.

Your spotless charms again,  
Shall joyfully be sung,  
By old and by the young,  
Wherever they may wend ;  
And all the birds shall sing,  
Each in his own blithe notes,  
At evening and at morn,  
On every verdant bough :  
The world shall be all song ;  
For now the time is come,  
To praise, as it behoves,  
Your great exalted worth,  
Who are created in an angel's mould.

Features angelical,  
Lady, repose in you.  
O how by fortune blest  
Hath been my soul's desire !  
Your countenance of joy  
So passes and excels  
All nature and all wont,  
That wondrous is its charm.  
Goddess, by ladies hailed,  
Goddess you truly are.  
So gloriously adorned,  
No words of mine can tell,  
For who can think what passes nature's bounds ?

Beyond man's nature far,  
Your spotless loveliness  
Of heavenly mould was formed,  
That you might be supreme :  
O may your presence then  
Be never far from me ;  
Nor may kind Providence  
Be unpropitious now :  
And if a wrong you deem  
The privilege to love you,  
To blame me, O forbear !  
For love constrains my will,  
'Gainst whom nor force nor reason can prevail.



## BALLATA IX. 1

*Io non domando, Amore.*

O LOVE, I ask no boon,  
Beyond the power of ever pleasing thee ;  
So do I love, dear lord,  
To follow thee, all seasons of the year.

And in all seasons equal is my love,  
Of that sweet gentle lady,  
Whom thou, O Love, didst show me suddenly,  
Upon a day, when in my mind sunk deep  
Her humble countenance,  
From seeing thee abide in her fair eyes.  
For since that day the heart  
Hath taken no delight in other thing,  
But in remembering  
Incessantly the lovely sight then seen.

This dear remembrance, Love, delights me so,  
And imaged is so strong,  
That ever do I see what then I saw ;  
But to describe it, what I feel denies ;  
Hence in my mind alone  
It lies deposited, and I am mute ;  
For its true colouring  
No words of mine have power to display.  
As best may seem to thee,  
O Love, interpret for me, where I serve.

To thee, Love, I am bound  
Ever to render honour, since desire  
Thou gavest me to obey  
That lady so pre-eminent in worth.

## BALLATA X.

Quando il consiglio degli auget si tenne.

ONCE when a council of the birds was held,  
It was decreed that all,  
On hearing of the summons, must appear.  
A roguish jackdaw, vain and full of guile,  
Resolved to change her garb,  
And borrowed plumes from many various birds,

And when adorned in them to council came ;  
But was not long endured ;  
For fine beyond all others was her air :  
And one bird asked another, Who is this ?  
So that at last the daw  
Was recognised. Now hear what then ensued.

Around her all the other birds collected,  
And then without delay,  
So stripped her plumes that naked she was left ;  
And one said, Now the pretty minx admire !  
Another said, She moults !  
And thus they left her ridiculed and scorned.

Such fate we daily see attend the man  
Who knavishly assumes  
The virtues of another and the fame ;  
For many times he glows  
With others' warmth, soon after to be frozen :  
Then blest is he who on himself depends.

## SONNET XXIII.

Molti volendo dir che fosse Amore.

MANY who fain would tell us what is Love  
 Have lavished store of words, but still have failed  
 To tell of him in terms approaching truth,  
 And to define the nature of his worth.  
 One hath described him as a mental flame,  
 Imagination's offspring, born of Thought ;  
 Others have said he was Desire, the child  
 Of Will, and born of Pleasure in the heart.  
 But I would say that Love no substance hath,  
 Nor is a thing corporeal having form ;  
 But rather is a passion in desiring ;  
 Pleasure from beauty springing, nature's gift ;  
 Such that the heart's wish every wish exceeds,  
 And all-sufficient while that pleasure lasts.

## SONNET XXIV.

Deh ragioniamo un poco insieme, Amore.

OH, let us, Love, converse a while together,  
 And draw me from the smart of painful thought ;  
 And for our mutual delight, dear lord,  
 Grant that our gentle lady be the theme.  
 Doubtless our journey shorter will appear,  
 Choosing so sweet a subject and so calming,  
 And joyful the returning seems already,  
 Hearing her praise and telling it again.  
 Begin then, Love ; to thee it best belongs,  
 And be thou moved to this, for she is cause  
 That thou hast deigned to bear me company.  
 And whether pity or thy courtesy  
 Relieve my mind, and calm my troubled thoughts,  
 To hear thee my impatience is the same.

## SONNET XXV.

*Ora che l' mondo si adorna e veste.*

Now that the world adorns itself in robes  
 Of leaves and flowers, and every meadow smiles,  
 And from its face the sky drives cold and mist,  
 And all that live commence a festival,  
 And each one seems to address itself to love :  
 The little birds send forth their voice in song,  
 And cease their loud laments and plaintive cries,  
 Cheering the mountains and the plains and groves:  
 I, too, when the sweet season bright and blithe  
 Of spring returns in verdant loveliness,  
 Awake to joy, and renovate my hope ;  
 Like him whose honour and whose life depend  
 Upon that lord beyond all sovereigns loved ;  
 And who to me his servant ne'er will fail.

## SONNET XXVI.

*Glovinetta gentil, poichè tu vede.*

YOUNG, tender, noble maiden, since you see  
 That Love, with your consent, has made me yours,  
 And that for you I burn, and waste, and pine,  
 O let me not expire without reward.  
 O Love, dear lord, haply thou disbelievest  
 How hard she is, and cruel is my pain ;  
 For in thy generous heart there must exist  
 The will to succour my fidelity.  
 And, lady, every pain would be removed  
 If hope were realised, and I were blest  
 With joy which Love solicits you to grant.  
 O help me then, Madonna, ere I die ;  
 I live for that alone, and if denied,  
 A corse you soon will see me at your feet.

## SONNET XXVII.

*Lo fin piacer di quello adorno viso.*

THE pure delight of that fair countenance  
 Composed the arrow, darted by the eyes  
 Into my heart, when they were turned on me,  
 Who, fixed in wonder, on their beauty gazed.  
 I then perceived the spirit taking flight  
 From every limb, that trembled with the smart ;  
 And as the sighs went forth, they mournfully  
 Exclaimed, with tears, that the fond heart was slain.  
 Thenceforth each thought of my afflicted soul  
 Wept bitterly, for ever in my view  
 The image of her excellence remained :  
 One thought there is which thus bespeaks the heart :  
 Pity is not a virtue formed for us,  
 Thou find'st it so, and thence is my despair.

## SONNET XXVIII.

*Nelle man vostre, o dolce donna mia.*

INTO thy hands, sweet lady of my soul !  
 The spirit that is dying I commend ;  
 And which departs so sorrowful, that Love  
 Views it with pity while dismissing it.  
 By you to his dominion it was bound  
 So firmly, that it since hath had no power  
 To call on him, but thus : O mighty lord,  
 Whate'er thou wilt of me, thy will is mine.  
 I know that every wrong displeaseth thee ;  
 Therefore that death which I have not deserved  
 Enters my heart with much more bitterness.  
 O gentle lady, whilst this life remains,  
 That I may die in peace, with mind consoled,  
 Be pleased to be more bounteous to mine eyes.

## SONNET XXIX.

*Dagli occhi belli di questa mia dama.*

THE beauteous eyes of my sweet lady pour  
 Love's influence in a stream so bright and full,  
 That every one who sees her bows the head  
 With awe, nor other object e'er desires.  
 Beauty and courtesy their goddess call her ;  
 And rightly so, for creature so refined  
 As she, appears not human but divine ;  
 And ever ever rising in her fame.  
 Who loveth her how can he hope content,  
 Seeing her manifold and heavenly gifts ?  
 Ask how I know them, I reply, I feel ;  
 But if thou ask their number, and how great,  
 Say, 'tis not to be told ; for more are they  
 Than infinite, and others all excel.

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## SONNET XXX.

*Ben dico certo che non è riparo.*

WITH truth I say, ne'er was there shield so strong  
 Could save me from the darts of her fair eyes ;  
 And this their mighty power I do not blame,  
 But her hard heart, to every favour closed :  
 For from my sight she hides her lovely face,  
 Whose brightness heals the wounds of my sad heart  
 That finds not in my tears the least relief ;  
 Nor does my bitterest lament affect her.  
 Thus is she ever beautiful and cruel,  
 The foe of pity and estranged from love ;  
 But most it pains me to declare these truths,  
 Wrung from my heart by violence of grief,  
 And not by anger, for I none can feel ;  
 But love her more than self with faith unchanged.

## SONNET XXXI.

*Questa donna oh' andar mi fa pensoso.*

THIS lady, who clouds all my ways with care,  
 Bears in her countenance the power of Love,  
 Which wakens in the chambers of the heart  
 The gentle spirit that is hidden there.  
 So fearful hath she made me, since I saw  
 Within her eyes my sweet and sovereign lord  
 Enthroned in all the glory of his might,  
 That I approach, yet tremble to regard her.  
 And when perchance upon those eyes I look,  
 I see that bliss and safety there abide  
 Which my weak intellect can ne'er attain :  
 Then all my mental power is so destroyed  
 That the desiring soul, which moves my sighs,  
 Prepares with willingness to leave the heart.

## SONNET XXXII.

*Ahi lasso ! oh' io credea trovar pietate.*

ALAS ! I fondly thought that I should find  
 Compassion in my lady, when she knew  
 The deep affliction which my heart endures ;  
 And I find nought but cruelty and scorn,  
 And anger strong, in place of gentleness :  
 So that I deem myself a person dead ;  
 For what should give me confidence and rest  
 Discomforts me, and threatens me with woe.  
 Therefore a thought, reproaching me, demands  
 How I can longer live, having no hope .  
 That she and pity will in peace be joined.  
 Hence it behoves me die ; and I may say,  
 In evil hour have I Bologna seen,  
 And that fair lady whom I there admired.

## SONNET XXXIII.

*Madonne, deh vedeste voi l' altr' ieri.*

TELL me, kind ladies, have you seen of late  
 That gentle creature who my life consumes ?  
 To you I own, that if she do but smile  
 My thoughts dissolve as snow before the sun.  
 Hence on my heart such cruel blows arrive  
 That they would seem to threaten me with death :  
 Kind ladies then, wherever ye may see her,  
 If you by chance should meet her on your way,  
 O rest with her awhile for pity's sake,  
 And with humility make known to her  
 That my life bears for her the weight of death :  
 And if in mercy she will comfort me,  
 And ease the mind deep laden with my griefs,  
 O send to me, far distant, the glad news.

## SONNET XXXIV.

*Se gli occhi miei saettasser quadrella.*

IF arrows could be darted by my eyes,  
 Or, there were poison in them of such power,  
 That they must kill whatever they regard,  
 As of the fabled basilisk is told ;  
 The wrong would be too cruelly avenged  
 Of her who robs me of my heart and mind :  
 Who now when I would fondly gaze on her,  
 Her person hides and all her loveliness.  
 But well I know that when I look on her,  
 No darts but those of love the eyes can throw,  
 Such pleasure to my heart her looks convey.  
 O, would to heaven, that for the sufferings  
 Inflicted on my heart for love of her,  
 I could but draw from her one gentle sigh.



## SONNET XXXV.

*Bicci, novel figliuol di non so cui.*

BICCI, strange offspring of I know not whom,  
 Unless the secret Monna Tessa tell,  
 Vile gluttony thy substance has devoured,  
 And now from others thou art forced to steal.  
 From Bicci every man guards well his purse,  
 If he approach the side at which it hangs,  
 Saying ; This fellow, with his double face,  
 In all his actions is an open robber.  
 And one I know, who wretched lies in bed  
 For fear it should be alyly stolen by him ;  
 For ravenous as Antichrist is Bicci.  
 Of Bicci and the brothers I can say ;  
 Brothers in law most rare their wives may boast,  
 Kindred alike in blood and villany.



## SONNET XXXVI.

*Chi udisse tossir la mal fatata.*

HE whom the ill-starred wife of him we name  
 Bicci Forese should distract by coughing,  
 Would say she must have wintered near the Pole,  
 Where frost eternal binds the crystal wave.  
 Oppressed with rheums she shivers in mid August ;  
 Think then her sufferings in each cooler month !  
 To her avails not sleeping in her hose,  
 And wrapt in downy quilt of soft Cortona.  
 The cough, the cold, and all her other ills  
 Proceed not from the humours chilled by age,  
 But from defect of comfort felt at home.  
 Her mother weeps, distressed with many a grief,  
 Saying : Alas ! rather on figs to feed,  
 Would, in Count Guido's house, that I had placed her.

## SONNET XXXVII.

*Non conoscendo, amico, vostro nome,*

THOUGH unacquainted with thy name, my friend,  
 And what thy motive for addressing me,  
 Yet well a great man's knowledge I discern,  
 Who speaks like none of all the learned I know.  
 Reasoning the touchstone is to know a man ;  
 If he have sense in speaking 'twill appear :  
 To praise thee then were a superfluous task,  
 And worse than vain by such a tongue as mine.  
 Know this, my friend, of which I who have loved,  
 And have been loved, am sure, that he who loves  
 And is not loved, endures of woes the greatest :  
 For that affliction holds within its grasp  
 All others, and of every one is chief,  
 And is the source of Love's severest pangs.

## SONNET XXXVIII.

*Savete giudicar vostra ragione.*

You who of knowledge bear the palm away,  
 Can best expound the enigma of your vision ;  
 But yet, not to dispute your wish, I answer,  
 As best I may to your well polished rhymes.  
 True love, of which an end is rarely found,  
 Which has its source in beauty and in worth,  
 And which supposes a return of love,  
 Was by the gift implied which first was offered.  
 The garment of the lady whom you love  
 Gives you a hope well founded, and herein  
 Your mind a true prophetic spirit shows.  
 Reflecting on her courtesy which followed,  
 And on the apparition of one dead,  
 These I deem tokens of a faithful heart.

## SONNET XXXIX.

Qual che voi siate, amico, vostro manto.

WHOR'ER thou art, my friend, thy knowledge seems  
 An ample robe, and of no common kind :  
 Hence at my want of talent I am vexed,  
 Ill able to content thee, less to praise.  
 Well must thou know, for I myself well know,  
 Compared with thine my knowledge is a mite ;  
 Nor in the path of wisdom do I walk,  
 Like thee, who seem'st in wisdom panoplied.  
 Since 'tis thy pleasure then to know my heart,  
 I show it to thee here without deceit,  
 As best becomes the prudent in discourse.  
 This to my mind seems certainly a truth,  
 That he who is a lover, and unloved,  
 Bears in his heart a grief beyond compare.

## SONNET XL.

Oimè, Comun, come conciar ti veggio.

UNHAPPY Commonwealth ! how do I see  
 Thee spoiled by neighbours and transalpine foes !  
 But more than all by thine own citizens,  
 Whose duty is to lift thee up on high.  
 Who most should honour thee, ill treats thee most ;  
 Perverted or rejected are thy laws :  
 Each one to rend a shiver from thy trunk  
 Plies hard his hook, his talons, and his saw.  
 A soul remains not who thy welfare heeds :  
 One takes thy staff from thee, thy sandals one,  
 Another strips thee tearing off thy robe.  
 The sins of all are visited on thee ;  
 No one bestows a thought upon thy grief,  
 Or thy debasement if himself he raise.

## SONNET XLI.

*Se nel mio ben ciascun fosse leale.*

If all were loyal, and my welfare sought  
 As zealously as all to rob me strive,  
 Not even Rome herself, when governed best,  
 With Florence would in majesty compare.  
 But be assured that time has yet in store,  
 Early or late, a vengeance for this guilt.  
 Who robs me, from a living fund shall pay  
 Back to the commonwealth his guilty spoil.  
 For erst I gave the summit of my wheel  
 To one who wronged and plundered me as now ;  
 And afterwards we saw his seat left void.  
 And thou who hast ascended on his fall,  
 My words remember and example take,  
 And wisdom's lesson learn at his expense.  
 Thou see'st that justice can avenge my wrongs,  
 O then be warned, nor traffic with my treasure.

## SONNET XLII.

*Messer Brunetto, questa pulzelletta.*

BRUNETTO, this my pretty little maiden  
 Is come to keep the feast of Easter with you ;  
 Not that on Easter dainties she would fare,  
 No feaster she, but rather would be studied.  
 To comprehend her, leisure is required,  
 A place removed from noise and revelry ;  
 Nor will she, until after much caressing,  
 Deign to reveal to any one her meaning.  
 If in this guise you understand her not,  
 Among your friends are many friar Alberts  
 Able to solve whatever I propound them :  
 With them in sober seriousness confer ;  
 And should the rest by sundry doubts be puzzled,  
 Then have recourse at last to Messer Giano.

## SONNET XLIII.

*Non v'accorgete voi d'un che si muore.*

TAKE you no heed of one who is a dying  
 And weeping goes, such his discouragement ?  
 I pray you if unheeded he hath been,  
 That you regard him for your honour's sake.  
 Dismay attends his steps, and such his hue,  
 It makes him seem as if a person dead ;  
 Grief too so heavily weighs down his eyes,  
 He has not power to raise them from the earth.  
 And when with pity one does look on him,  
 His heart with weeping wholly melts away,  
 And his soul's sorrow vents itself in cries :  
 And if he shunned not then the haunts of man,  
 So loud he calls on you, amid his sighs,  
 The world might say : Who kills him now we know.

## SONNET XLIV.

*Per villania di villana persona.*

NEVER should vulgar thoughts of vulgar minds,  
 Or words of scandal by the wicked spread,  
 Disturb the peace of her who knows her worth,  
 And wears a crown of honour and esteem.  
 Never should she believe that her good fame,  
 Which bright and spotless shines on every side,  
 Can be denied, since conscience makes her feel  
 That truth affords no ground for a reproach.  
 You lady, like a rose amidst the thorns,  
 And like the purest gold within the fire,  
 Are prized and loved wherever you are seen.  
 Then let the fools indulge the venom'd tongue ;  
 For more refined your virtues will appear  
 Than if such wretches noticed you with praise.

## SONNET XLV.

*Se l' Dio d'Amor venisse fia la gente.*

If to the earth the God of love should come,  
 So that I could complain to him of you,  
 I instantly would throw me at his feet  
 And tell my wrong ; but dare not say from whom.  
 Or should there come some other mighty lord,  
 Who had the power and wisdom to decide  
 Between us two, to him should be referred  
 The justice due to those who steal the heart.  
 Stolen is my heart by the sweet look of her  
 Whose sudden apparition captured me,  
 And that I leave it with her she insists.  
 O be not jealous that I love another ;  
 For 'tis not any proof of her high merit  
 If I commit an error by her fault.

## SONNET XLVI.

*Savere e cortesia, ingegno ed arte.*

WISDOM and courtesy, genius and art,  
 Beauty and wealth, and true nobility,  
 Courage and meekness, and a liberal heart,  
 Prowess and excellence, conjoined and singly,  
 Virtues and graces are that everywhere  
 By their sweet power of pleasing conquer Love :  
 One than another more of worth may have  
 In Love's regard, but each one has a part.  
 Hence if thou wish, my friend, to make avail  
 Thy virtues, whether native or acquired,  
 Employ them loyally in pleasing Love ;  
 Never oppose his gracious ministry,  
 Assured that nothing can defend the man  
 Who wages battle wilfully with him.

## SONNET XLVII.

*Quando la notte abbraccia con fosch' ale.*

WHEN night with sable wing the earth enshrouds,  
 And day departs, and hides itself in heaven,  
 In ocean, and in grove ; and bird and beast  
 Amid the boughs, or in the byre find rest ;  
 And sleep o'er every limb its gentle balm  
 Diffuses, undisturbed by care or thought,  
 Until Aurora with her tresses fair  
 Returns, and day's fatigue again renews ;  
 I, wretched, am an outcast of my kind,  
 For grief and sighs, the enemies of rest,  
 My eyes keep open and my heart awake ;  
 And like a bird enveloped in a net,  
 The more I seek and struggle to escape,  
 The more I am entangled and am lost.



## SONNET XLVIII.

*Alessandro lasciò la signoria,*

ALEXANDER hath the world's dominion left,  
 Samson his mighty strength, and Absalom  
 His grace and beauty without parallel,  
 A banquet to the still devouring worm.  
 The Stagyrite has left Philosophy,  
 And Charlemagne his princely qualities,  
 Octavius his empire and his wealth,  
 Arthur his kingdom and his valiant knights.  
 All these things wait the general doom of death ;  
 Therefore let every one prepare his mind  
 To endure the heavy burden of his lot ;  
 Deferring not good works if he be old,  
 Performing them if in the strength of youth,  
 And serving Him the mirror of all light.

## SONNET XLIX.

*O madre di virtute, luce eterna.*

PARENT of virtue, light eternal, thou,  
 Of whom was born the meek benignant fruit  
 That suffered on the cross a bitter death,  
 To save us sinners from the dark abyss :  
 Thou, queen of heaven, and of this world, supreme,  
 Vouchsafe to entreat thy ever-worthy son  
 To bring me to his heavenly kingdom's joys,  
 By virtue of his never-failing grace.  
 Thou knowest my hope was ever placed in thee ;  
 Thou knowest in thee was ever my delight ;  
 O goodness infinite, support me now ;  
 Help me, for at the bourn I am arrived  
 Which I must soon inevitably pass ;  
 O now, chief comforter, forsake me not :  
 For every fault committed here on earth  
 My soul deplores, and contrite is my heart.

## SONNET L.

*Sonetto, se Meuccio t'è mostrato.*

MY sonnet, if Meuccio thou shouldst meet,  
 Salute him when thou seest him instantly,  
 And haste thee at his feet to throw thyself,  
 That thy respect and breeding may appear.  
 And after tarrying with him for awhile,  
 Again salute him ; but thy counsel keep  
 Till thou hast drawn him privately aside ;  
 Then speak, and with thy embassy proceed.  
 And say, Meuccio, he who loves thee much  
 Presents thee with the choicest of his gems,  
 That thou mayst hold him near thy noble heart.  
 But, as my first of gifts, make him accept  
 These thy fair brothers ; and commend that they  
 Remain with him, nor hithermore return.



## SONNET LI.

*Tu che stampi lo colle ombroso e fresco.*

O THOU who tread'st the cool and shady hill  
 Skirting the river, which so softly glides  
 That gentle Linceus 'tis by natives called,  
 In the Italian, not the German name,  
 Contented sit thee down at morn and eve,  
 For thy beloved child already bears  
 The fruit desired, and his growth hath been  
 Rapid in Grecian and in Gallic lore.  
 Genius, alas ! no longer holds her throne  
 In that Hesperia, now the abode of woe,  
 Whose gardens once such noble promise gave.  
 Yet, my Bossone, well mayst thou rejoice,  
 For thou shalt see thy son amid the learn'd  
 Swim proudly as a galliot on the wave.

## SONNET LII.

*Volgete gli occhi a veder chi mi tira.*

O TURN thine eyes, and see the attractive power  
 Through whom I can no longer live with thee,  
 And render him all honour, for tis he  
 Who tortures man by gentle lady's charms.  
 His power benign which kills, but not in wrath,  
 Beseech, that he permit me to return :  
 And let me warn thee that his ways are such,  
 He listens most to him who sighs the most.  
 For by a lady is my mind possessed,  
 Who rules me with such gentle cruelty,  
 That to her feet my willing service runs,  
 And silently I hear a voice which says :  
 Wouldst thou of one so lovely rob my eyes,  
 Nor for the theft the smallest forfeit pay !

## SONNET LIIL.

Un di si venne a me Melanconia.

ONE day came Melancholy to my door,  
 And said : With thee I would abide awhile ;  
 And, as it seemed to me, she led with her  
 Anger and Grief, to bear her company.  
 I instantly cried out, Away, begone !  
 She with a Greek's persuasive tongue replied ;  
 And while discoursing with me at her ease,  
 I looked, and Love beheld approaching us.  
 Full strangely was he clad in mantle black,  
 And with a mourner's hat upon his head,  
 And truly wept in all sincerity.  
 Poor little rogue, I said, what ails thee now ?  
 He answered me, I pensive am and sad,  
 For, my sweet brother, our lady's dying.

~~~~~

DANTE,

ALTERED FROM BOCCACCIO.

## SONNET.

Dante Alighieri son, Minerva oscura.

THOU Dante art my author, bard obscure,  
 Sublime, intelligent, whose genius sung  
 Mysterious truth, and gave the Tuscan tongue  
 Beauty and strength for ever to endure.  
 Thy fancy, prompt and daringly secure,  
 Roamed thoughtfully the spiritual worlds among  
 Of woe and bliss, whence, to thy glory, sprung  
 The Sacred Vision, written to allure  
 Mankind to win all joy in earth and heaven.  
 Fair Florence was a parent most unjust  
 To thee her pious son, to exile driven  
 And penury. Ravenna was thy trust,  
 And guards thy ashes. May thy soul have flown  
 Where justice reigns and envy is unknown !



## NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

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THE works of Fraticelli have been mentioned in the Preface as indispensable to the student of the Lyrical Poems of Dante. There are many other works which are most desirable ; and an enumeration of them, with characters and specimens of each, may be seen in the recent excellent edition of the *Vita Nuova*, by Alessandro Torri (Livorno, 1843). From them, and from the labours of Professor Rossetti, it were an easy task to select notes that might fill a volume, which the critic would admit to be useful and highly interesting ; but I fear it would be very unprofitable to an English publisher. At all events, it would be unsuitable to the present publication, which can afford but few pages for illustrations ; and these shall be devoted, therefore, chiefly to matter connected with Dante, that is not to be found elsewhere.

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### VITA NUOVA.\*

SONETTO I.—Three answers only to this Sonnet, from contemporary poets—Cavalcante,\* Cino, and Dante da Majano, have been preserved. That by Cino da Pistoja is as follows :—

*Naturalmente chere ogni amadora.*

Nature prompts every lover to impart  
Unto his lady-love his heart's desire ;  
A truth, which in the vision you relate,  
'Twas Love's intention to recall to you.  
This he expressed, when with humility  
He fed your lady with your burning heart,

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\* See p. 2, *Vedesti*, al mio, &c.

Who, in his mantle wrapt, had long enjoyed  
 Freedom from every care in gentle sleep ;  
 Love showed his joy, as he advanced to you,  
 To give you that which most your heart desired,  
 In the combining two fond hearts in one ;  
 And knowing well the pains of love and cares  
 That were engendered in the lady's breast,  
 He pitied her, and went his way in tears.

The reply of Dante da Majano is as follows :—

*Di ciò che stato sei dimandatore.*

To you, my friend, unknowing in such matters,  
 I send a brief reply to your request ;  
 With my opinion on your wondrous dream ;  
 Exhibiting its import faithfully.  
 This, at your service then, is my response.  
 Should you be sound in body, sane in mind,  
 Then copiously your stomach lave and cleanse,  
 The vapours to extinguish and expel  
 Which generate such dreams and idle whims ;  
 But if you labour under sore disease  
 I really must suppose your brain disordered.  
 Thus do I tender you my written thoughts ;  
 Nor will my judgment change until I learn  
 What light the doctor's aqueous test affords.

This coarse production, and the better verses of Cino and of Cavalcante, are of some value, as they seem to show that the writers had no idea of the mysteries concerning Beatrice, in the first sonnet of the *Vita Nuova*, which are imagined by Professor Rossetti, (see *Sp. Antip.* 318, *Am. Plat.* p. 319, 457, 1265). Some years ago (May, 1834) I sent the following lines to Professor Rossetti, as a supposed answer to Dante by one who considered that he had merely to interpret a lover's dream, and invited him to compose one of an opposite character, expressing the mysterious sense which Dante intended to convey.

In reply to Sonnet I., *Vita Nuova*.

Dante, thy mystic dream appears to me  
 A faithful, shadowy picture of the state  
 Of youthful poet ardently in love,  
 Who hopes and doubts and joys and weeps by turns.  
 Love, filled with joy, oft comes at night's still hour  
 And shows the lady to his raptured mind ;  
 He sees an angel form, unveiled as truth,  
 Artless as sleep, in Love's own vesture robed ;  
 Then fondly dreams she wakes to Love and him,  
 And takes the humble offering of his heart  
 With virgin fear, and lives on it alone.

Blest is he then, nor change nor ill forebodes;  
 But Love is wayward as an April morn,  
 And clouds and showers succeed brief gleams of joy.

Professor Rossetti, in return, with the readiness of an improvisatore, in which talent his power is very remarkable, sent me immediately the following sonnet, in the same rhymes as that of Dante, and desired it to be imagined the reply of a sound Catholic, who saw with displeasure the same antipapal spirit (though skilfully concealed) in the Lyrical Poems of Dante, as is shown without disguise in the *Commedia*.

## SONETTO.

Ben al membrar l'essenzia dell' Amore  
 Che sì t' apparve, orror n' ha la tua mente!  
 Chè quando essenzia tal fu altrui parvente  
 Morte ne venne sempre all' amatore.  
 Le sette stelle t' atterzaron l' ore  
 Per fare alto mistero a te presente,  
 Mistero è Amor, Madonna, e 'l cor ardente,  
 Mistero è il drappo, il gaudio ed il dolore.  
 Tai mistiche figure io ben comprendo,  
 Ma rivelarne altrui l' interna idea  
 Gran misfatto saria, misfatto orrendo!  
 E chi gl' intende appien com' io gl' intendo,  
 Preso da quel orror che il cor t' emplea  
 Ai detti tuoi risponderà tacendo.

The following is a literal translation :

Dante, Love's vision well might fill thy mind  
 With horror, when his essence thou recall'st;  
 For when that essence to the world is shown,  
 Death to the lover never fails to come.  
 For thee the seven stars the hours marked  
 With trinal signs, a mystery deep to shew;  
 Love, and Madonna, and the burning heart,  
 The mantle, smiles and tears, are mysteries all.  
 Fully these mystic types I comprehend;  
 But to reveal their import to the world  
 Were guilt, a deed of danger and of shame:  
 And he who knows their meaning well as I,  
 Seized with that horror which thy heart dismayed,  
 By silence to thy lines will best respond.

This sonnet is in accordance with the theory of Professor Rossetti, who considers the essence of love in the poems of the Ghibelines of the middle ages to be anti-papalism;

a meaning which, if it had been known to the Inquisition, would inevitably, as the sonnet expresses, have brought down death on the lover. It is probable that the anti-papal sentiments of Dante, the boldness and danger of which astonish us in the *Commedia*, were divulged to few till after his death; or it may be, that prudential motives induced the Inquisition to overlook them. Even at this day every true Romanist must read them with a portion of the horror expressed in Professor Rossetti's sonnet, from their direct tendency to shake the very foundations of his church.

Guido Cavalcante's interpretation of the dream, Dante informs us, was not the true one; and he adds, that the true solution was afterwards known to every one. Unfortunately, he has not thought proper to record it; and, as that of the only *Œdipus* who has attempted to give it is disputed, we have still to invoke a *Magnus Apollo*.

The completest discourse on the essence or nature of love, of the immense number that have appeared, is one of eight lectures, delivered by Benedetto Varchi, in the Florentine Academy, 1553. In it he has made the vehicle of his ideas a comment on the following sonnet of Petrarch.

*S' amor non è, che dunque è quel ch' io sento?*

*If love this is not, what then do I feel?*

*But if 'tis love, who shall its nature tell?*

*If good, whence its effect so deadly and severe?*

*If ill, whence in its torments is such sweet?*

*If willingly I burn, whence tears and plaints?*

*If in the will's despite, 'tis vain to grieve!*

*O living death! O evil full of joy!*

*If I oppose thee, whence thy mighty power?*

*If I consent, most wrongfully I mourn.*

*In a frail bark, 'midst winds so contrary,*

*I float on the deep sea without a helm;*

*With sense so light, with error heavy laden,*

*That to myself my wishes are not known,*

*Freezing in summer, while I burn in frost.*

In this lecture, Varchi notices every beautiful and every extravagant fancy which Petrarch and the poets of the first age have connected with the passion of love; but we do not observe the slightest hint that political sentiments were ever secretly conveyed under that symbol.

Sonnet VIII. of the *Vita Nuova* is a reply to the question, What is Love? and Dante in the two first lines,

*Love and the gentle heart are but one thing;  
As says the wise man in his apophthegm;*

alludes to and adopts the sentiment of Guido Guinicelli (died, 1276), to whom he pays the great compliment of saying,

He was a father to me, and to those  
My betters, who have ever used the sweet  
And pleasant rhymes of love.

Purg. xxvi. 92.

Cary has translated some pleasing specimens of his poetry, and given them in a note (Purg. xi. 97). We shall add the Canzone to which Son. VIII., V. N., refers, as being interesting in itself, and in order to bring it in contrast with another, on the same subject, by Guido Cavalcante, to whose *poetical talents* Dante gives a preference in the following passage of the *Commedia* :

Cimabue thought  
To lord it over painting's field ; and now  
The cry is Giotto's, and his name eclipsed.  
Thus hath one Guido from the other snatched  
The letter'd prize. Purg. xi. 94.

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#### CANZONE OF GUIDO GUINICELLI.

Al cor gentil ripara sempre Amore.

Love finds a refuge in the gentle heart,  
As bird his safety in the verdant bough.  
Before the gentle heart Love was not made ;  
Nor Nature made the gentle heart ere Love.  
Soon as the Sun came forth,  
So soon the splendour of its brightness shone ;  
Nor was before the Sun.  
And Love assumes his place in gentleness  
By a peculiar right,  
As heat takes place in brightness of the fire.  
The fire of Love in gentle heart is caught,  
As is the virtue in the precious stone ;  
For from the star its worth doth not descend  
Till by the Sun 'tis made a gentle thing :  
When everything that's vile  
The Sun from it hath by its power drawn forth,  
The star then gives it worth ;  
Just so the heart by Nature fashioned pure,  
Sincere, and generous,  
A gentle lady, like the Star, enamours.  
Love by his nature rests in gentle heart,  
As on the taper's summit rests the flame :



There bright and subtle happily it shines ;  
 Nor could its pride another place endure.  
 But Nature when depraved  
 Opposes Love, as fire with water strives,  
 Or heat contends with cold.  
 Love in the gentle heart finds an abode  
 As his congenial place,  
 Like as the diamond in the mine of iron.  
 The mire all day is stricken by the Sun  
 Yet vile remains, nor is the Sun less bright.  
 The proud man says : Gentle am I by birth.  
 The mire is he ; nobility the Sun ;  
 For man must not believe  
 That noble he can be whose heart is base,  
 Though regal were his state,  
 If virtue there is not and noble heart.  
 The lake retains no ray ;  
 But heaven retains its splendour and the stars.  
 Midst heaven's Intelligences shines our God  
 More than to eyes of man the splendid Sun.  
 Without a veil the angel sees his Maker,  
 And heaven finds in wishing to obey him.  
 He worships and obtains  
 Fulness of bliss from a just Deity :  
 So should the bliss of truth  
 Be by the lovely lady given, whose eyes  
 Express their generous will,  
 To him who from her love can never swerve.  
 Spirit, our Judge will say, when stands the soul  
 Before his throne : Greatly hast thou presumed !  
 Thou heaven hast passed, to me at length hast come,  
 And given thy love to beauty, not to me ;  
 For unto me all praise  
 Belongs, and to the Queen of heaven's realm,  
 In whom is perfect truth.  
 Then shall I say : She had an angel's features  
 Who to thy realm belonged ;  
 My fault it was not if she won my love.

The above poem of Guinicelli is far more pleasing and  
 intelligible than the famous canzone on the same subject  
 of Guido Cavalcante,

Donna mi prega, perchè voglio dire,

which is believed to have been written in reply to the fol-  
 lowing sonnet, addressed to him in name of a lady, by  
 Guido Orlandi.

Onde si muove, e d' onde nasce Amore ?

Tell me whence Love proceeds, and whence its birth ?  
 What the appropriate place wherein it dwells ?

Is it remembrance? substance? accident?  
 Caused by the eye or by the heart's desire?  
 From what proceeds its state of rest? or rage  
 When it is felt as a devouring fire?  
 What is its nourishment? Again I ask  
 Of whom becomes it lord? and how and when?  
 What thing, I say, is Love? Hath it a shape?  
 Form of its own? or likeness of some other?  
 Is life this Love, or is it truly death?  
 He who Love serves should best his nature know.  
 Guido, I ask concerning him of you,  
 For you I hear frequent much at his court.

The canzone, in reply, is a dry, obscure, metaphysical treatise in verse, perfectly unsuited to poetry, and so foreign to modern taste that the fame it once obtained must surprise every reader of the present day; but being a literary curiosity which shows in a striking manner the taste of that age, in treating a subject on which, two centuries later, Pico di Mirandola, Ficino, Varchi, and so many eminent men employed, and in the opinion of Tiraboschi, wasted time and talents; and its having drawn forth not only extraordinary praise, but a comment from several writers remarkable for critical power, and never having been translated, we shall attempt to give it in English as literally as possible; adopting the interpretation we deem most intelligible, and taking the latest commentator, Frachetta, as our principal guide.

Dante, in his *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, (Cap. xii.) quotes this canzone as an example of the regular introduction of an intermediate rhyme, or echo of the rhyme, in a stanza where the verse is of eleven syllables. Petrarch introduces the first line, in compliment to the author, in his canzone,

Lasso me! ch'io non so in qual parte pieghi.

Lorenzo de' Medici, in a letter to Don Ferdinand of Arragon, says of Guido Cavalcante, "If his poetical talents had been exercised in a wider field, he would without doubt have obtained the highest honours. Of all his works, the most admirable is a canzone in which this graceful poet has subtly described every quality, virtue, and accident of love. It was esteemed of such value in his day, that three of his contemporaries, most distinguished philosophers, wrote learned comments upon it; one of whom was Egidio Romano."

There are four printed comments. 1. That of Egidio Colonna, called Egidio Romano, also Giles de Rome,

Archbishop of Bourges, who died 1316. He was styled Doctor Fundatissimus, and the epitaph on his tomb, in the church of the Augustines at Paris, describes him "*perspicacissimus commentator lux in lucem reducens dubia, &c. &c.*" It was printed, Siena 1602, with notes by Celso Cittadini. 2. That of Dino del Garbo, physician to Pope John XXII., who died 1327, published in Latin, Venetiis 1492; translated into Italian in the fourteenth century by Mangiatroja, and first published together with the *Rime di Cavalcante*, Firenze 1813. 3. That of Fra Paolo del Rosso, who died about 1567, published Firenze 1568. He dedicates it, in the following sonnet, to Cosmo de' Medici, the first Grand Duke of Tuscany.

Poiche lo stile, ond' orna il Cavalcante.

The style, poetic skill, and beauty which adorns  
The far-famed ode of Cavalcante's muse,  
And its high sentiments are such, that some  
In him a Petrarch, some a Dante see.

His portrait midst the worthies you have placed,  
Illustrious Cosmo, where his outward form  
Shall live for ages; and his countenance  
There speaks his bright and penetrating soul.

His mind I long have studied, which a frame  
Of diamonds clasped; and here present its fair  
And faithful picture, mighty Prince, to you:  
That men may own your judgment, and still more  
Admire our Guido's portrait, when they see  
His wisdom in this mirror of his mind.

4. That of Girolamo Frachetta, who died 1620, published Venetia 1585. In these comments the great authority referred to is constantly Aristotle, and not Plato. There is no allusion to the symposium, and the love discoursed of is not divine love, but human, intermediate between earthly and celestial love; a passion resulting, like the human being itself, from a compound of matter and spirit, of sense and reason, desire and free will.

To the names of these commentators we may add the celebrated preceptor and friend of Lozenzo de' Medici, Marsilio Ficino, who died 1499, whose work, "*Sopra lo Amore o ver' Convito di Platone*," Firenze 1544, is considered by Crescimbeni to be virtually a comment on the canzone, "*Donna mi prega*." In the *Orazione VII.*, Cap. 1, he takes the following general view of Cavalcante's poem.

"Guido Cavalcante surpassed all men of his time in

the subtleties of logic : he was a follower of the Socratic doctrine of love in his life and writings, and has briefly comprehended in his verses what is said of love in the banquet of Plato.

"Phædrus has there related that it sprung from chaos. Pausanias has divided it into two kinds, celestial and terrestrial. Erisymachus has declared its universality, and shown that the two kinds of love pervade all things. Aristophanes has explained what the power of this universal love can effect, and shows how mankind, who were at first biform and united, and were afterwards divided in two, may through love become one again. Agatho has treated of the great power and virtue of love, showing that it alone can make men blessed. Lastly, Socrates has, in a summary manner, answered the inquiry : What is love ? what are its qualities ? whence its origin ? how many distinctions it has, to what end it is directed, and how great is its worth.

"The philosopher, Guido Cavalcante, has included and answered all these inquiries skilfully in his verses. He begins his exposition with a simile, imagining that in like manner as a ray of the sun striking upon a mirror is reflected, and by that reflection of splendour may inflame a flock of wool which is near it, so that part of the soul which is called by him dark fancy, and memory, like the mirror, may be stricken by the image of beauty, which holds the place of the sun, as by a ray which hath entered through the eyes ; and that it may be stricken in such a manner that, by means of the said image, it may fabricate of itself another image, as reflected splendour of the first, by which splendour desire is kindled, in like manner as the wool, and being kindled becomes love. He adds, that this first love, kindled in the appetite of sense, is created by corporeal form, comprehended by the eyes ; but he says that that form is not impressed on the fancy in the same manner as it is on corporeal matter, but immaterially ; nevertheless it is so impressed that it may be the image of a certain human being, in a certain place, at a certain time ; and that from this image there suddenly flashes on the mind, one of another species, which is no longer the similitude of a particular human body as it existed in the fancy, but is a general term and definition, equally applicable to the whole human race. Then, like as from the fancy, after that it has comprehended the image proceeding from body, there springs in the appetite of sense, which is the slave of the body, the love which is applicable to the senses, so

from this mental species and general term, as from a thing most remote from body, there springs in the will another love, much alienated from the companionship of body. The first love has its place in sense, the second in contemplation ; and he considers that the first is concerned in the particular form of an individual body, and that the second is directed to the universal beauty of the whole human race ; and that these two loves oppose each other in man. The first inclines him to a life of irrational pleasure ; the second raises him to an angelic and contemplative life. The first is full of passion, and found in many people ; the second is without perturbation, and is found in few. Cavalcante, moreover, has mingled in the creation of love a certain darkness of chaos, when he said that the dark fancy was illuminated, and that from the mixture of that darkness and of the light of beauty love was born. Again, he places the first source of love in the beauty of divine things, the second in the beauty of bodies ; for when in his verses he speaks of the sun and ray, by the sun he means the light of the Divinity, by the ray corporeal forms ; and he teaches that the end of love corresponds to its origin ; so that the instinct of love, which inclines men to material beauty, causes them also to mount even to the vision of the Deity."

Egidio Colonna has introduced his comment on the canzone of Guido Cavalcante, with the following apologue :—

"I was in a dark wood, and wandering along a difficult and rugged path ; and being overcome with fatigue, I laid myself down to rest and fell asleep, and during my sleep I dreamed as follows.

"I seemed to be climbing up a very lofty mountain, from which there was a view of almost the whole world ; and beyond this there was another mountain that was loftier, whence things might be seen that were still more distant."

"Upon the first mountain stood a lady of extraordinary beauty, and before her there was a fire so great that it gave heat to all the world. Upon the other mountain that was loftier stood two ladies ; and in the midst of them was a very beautiful fountain, to which I was accustomed to go frequently and satisfy my thirst.

"And having a desire to go there and drink as I was wont, it behoved me to pass before the first-mentioned lady ; and as I went along I saw a young man kneeling before her, to whom she was addressing these words : 'Thou knowest me well, both by my features and my manners, and seest that I am Love : ' And he answered her, 'Ma-

donna, it is most true.' And the lady said to him, 'Now hear me, and listen attentively to what I shall tell thee. In times past I sent forth into the world two messengers, Solomon and Ovid; the one made me known throughout the world with music and song; the other composed the art by which I should be won and retained. From that time to the present I have sent no other messenger, and they who have written concerning me have done so either from desire of displaying their own inventions, or from being over-heated by this fire. Now I have made choice of thee for my third messenger, and have done so advisedly; for whereas the first was a teacher most melodious and divine, and the other a most perfect poet, so thou art a philosopher who aboundest in wisdom; and because thou art not the slave of love, but art the friend, I do not command thee, but I entreat thee, that thou wouldst renew the remembrance of me in the world, and relate my properties and hidden qualities which have not been discoursed upon by other writers.

"The noble youth having heard this, answered the lady and said, 'Madonna, that which you require of me shall be done; but since the world is full of different opinions, tell me the mode that you would wish me to observe in my discourse.' And the lady replied, 'I must reveal to you one of my qualities, which is, that I have only power to give the will to discourse, but the sentiments and mode I cannot give; but repair to those two ladies on the mountain above, who are the two sister philosophies, moral and natural, and they will teach the mode of thy discourse.' Having heard these things, I went forward in haste that I might observe the completion of this matter; and when I was near the two ladies, the young man came and stood before them and delivered his embassy as follows: 'The lady who is there on the mountain below you entreats me that I should renew the remembrance of her in the world, and sends me to you, that you may instruct me in the mode in which I may fitly deliver what I ought to say.' And they answered him, 'Wise young man, give ear to our advice, and hear this truth concerning us. We are not adverse to love; but we temper it that it may not be hurtful, in the same manner as the medical art tempers poisons and renders them useful; hence, they who have not recourse to our guidance perish through love, like a vessel in a tempest without a pilot. The mode thou shalt observe is this: In the first place, let thy discourse be brief; for, by how much the less there is in it

to be remembered, so much the greater will be its speed and efficacy in bestowing health on the world. Let the sentiments which thou shalt deliver be clothed with our vestments, so that they may not be understood by any one who is unacquainted with us ; and this we say, because the rest of mankind are incapable of being rightly governed in love.'

" Having heard this, the young man inquired of the ladies, and said, ' And who shall expound my discourse ? ' and they replied, ' That young man shall expound it ; he who is yonder, and who comes often to drink at this fountain.'

" And when the dream had vanished, and I awoke, and was out of the dark wood, I hastened to seek for this discourse ; and having obtained it, I proceeded to expound it, under the influence of the water of the said fountain.

## CANZONE.

## I.

Donna mi prega : perchè voglio dire  
D'un accidente, che sovente è fero :  
Et è sì altero, che è chiamato amore.  
Sì chi lo niega possa il ver sentire.  
Et al presente conoscente chero ;  
Perchè non spero, ch' uom di basso core  
A tal ragione porti conoscenza :  
Che senza natural dimostramento  
Non ho talento di voler provare,  
La dove posa ; et chi lo fa creare ;  
Et qual sia sua virtute ; et sua potenza ;  
L' essenza poi ; et ciascun movimento ;  
E 'l piacimento, che il fa dir amare ;  
Et se huomo per veder lo può mostrare.

## II.

In quella parte, dove sta memora  
Prende suo stato, sì formato, come  
Diaphan da lome, da una oscuritate,  
La qual da Marte viene, et fa dimora.  
Egli è creato ; et ha sensato nome ;  
D' alma costome, et di cor volontate.  
Vien da veduta forma, che s' intende :  
Che prende nel possibil' intelletto,  
Come in soggetto, loco, et dimoranza.  
In quella parte mai non ha pesanza ;  
Perche la qualitate non discende.  
Risplende in se, perpetuale effetto.  
Non ha diletto, ma consideranza,  
Sì che non puote largir simiglianza.

## III.

Non è vertute ; ma da quella viene  
 Ch'è perfettione, che si pone tale ;  
 Non rationale, ma che sente dico.  
 Fuor di salute giudicar mantiene,  
 Che la intensione per ragione vale ;  
 Discerne male in cui è vizio amico.  
 Di sua potentia segue huom spesso morte ;  
 Se forte la virtù fosse impedita  
 La qual aita la contraria via :  
 Non perchè opposita a natura sia ;  
 Ma quanto che da buon perfetto tort' è.  
 Per sorte non può dir huom c' haggia vita  
 Che stabilita non ha signoria  
 A simil può valor, quando huom l' oblia.

## IV.

L' essere, quando lo volere è tanto  
 Fuor di natura, di misura torna.  
 Poi non s' adorna di riposo mai.  
 Move cangiando color, e riso, e pianto ;  
 Et la figura con paura storna.  
 Poco soggiorna : anchor di lui vedrai  
 Ch' in gente di valor lo piu si trova.  
 La nova qualità move sospiri ;  
 Et vuol c' huom miri non fermato loco ;  
 Destandosi ira, la qual manda foco.  
 Imaginar no 'l puote huom che no 'l prova :  
 Ne mova già, perchè a lui si tiri ;  
 Et non si giri per trovarvi gioco,  
 Ne certamente gran saper, ne poco.

## V.

Di simil tragge complessione is guardo,  
 Che fa parere lo piacere certo.  
 Non può coperto star quando è sorgiunto.  
 Non già selvagge le beltà son dardo ;  
 Che tal volere per temere è sperto :  
 Consegue merto spirito, ch' è punto.  
 Et non si può conoscer per lo viso  
 Compriso, bianco in tal obietto cade :  
 Et chi ben aude forma non si vede ;  
 Dunque egli è meno che da lei procede.  
 Fuor di colore, d' essere diviso,  
 Assiso, mezzo oscuro luce rada.  
 Fuor d' ogni fraude dice degno in fede,  
 Che solo di costui nasce merceda.

## VI.

Canzon mia, tu poi gir sicuramente  
 Dove to place ; ch' io t' ho sì adornata,  
 Che assai laudata serà tua ragione  
 Da le persone, c' hanno intendimento :  
 Di star con l' altre tu non hai talento.



## CANZONE.

## I.

A lady sues, therefore I will discourse  
 Upon an accident, which oft torments,  
 Yet is so proudly great that love 'tis called.  
 He who shall this deny may feel its truth.  
 And the experienced I invite to hear ;  
 For I despair that man of vulgar heart  
 May knowledge bring for argument so high :  
 Since without proof deduced from nature's laws,  
 I have not power or will to demonstrate  
 Where is Love's seat, and how it is produced ;  
 And what may be its virtue, and its power ;  
 Its essence ; and each change it undergoes ;  
 What the delight to which love owes its name ;  
 And whether to the eye it can be shown.

## II.

Within the soul's recess where memory dwells  
 Love has its seat, there formed as brightness is  
 By light, in thing transparent that was dark ;  
 Which darkness is from Mars, and permanent.  
 Love is produced, and has its name from sense ;  
 A habit of the soul, a will of the heart ;  
 It springs from beauty seen and contemplated ;  
 Which takes, in the receptive intellect,  
 A dwelling place, as in a subject fit.  
 There, matter it has none, nor has it weight ;  
 For purely spiritual is its quality.  
 Love shines transplendant, long as beauty charms.  
 In contemplation is its whole delight,  
 Hence it can yield no likeness of itself.

## III.

A virtue love is not, but springs from that  
 Which perfect is, and is a virtue deemed ;  
 Not of the intellect, but sense I say.  
 'Tis prone to guide the judgment wide of health ;  
 For the intention holds right reason's place  
 He discerns ill in whom vice has a friend.  
 The power of love leads frequently to death,  
 If strong impediment the virtue meets,  
 Which aids life's course by way to death opposed :  
 Not that Love's nature hostile is to life ;  
 But only as 'tis bent from perfect good.  
 Perchance man may not rightly say he lives  
 Who has not o'er his will supreme command.  
 So, valour is as dead, exerted not.

## IV

Love's essence is, that as the will exceeds  
 The bounds of nature, so is its measure filled.

It then no more is with repose adorned ;  
 'Tis restless, changing colour, smiles and tears ;  
 And the fair image drives away with fear.  
 Brief does it sojourn ; yet thou shalt observe  
 That it is oftenest found in noble minds.  
 Love wills that new seen beauty call forth sighs,  
 And that man's eye should find no resting place ;  
 Awakening anger oft that sends forth fire.  
 He can conceive it not who proves it not ;  
 Let not man move near Love's attracting sphere,  
 Nor play around it, thinking to find joy,  
 Whether in knowledge he be rich or poor.

## V.

Like minds begat reciprocal regard,  
 Which makes love's mutual pleasure seem secure.  
 When thus impressed it cannot lie concealed.  
 Beauties that are not gentle are not darts ;  
 For love's fond wishes are repelled by fear :  
 The spirit that is pierced obtains reward.  
 Love cannot be discerned by eye of man,  
 For in such object colour is a blank :  
 Not form itself is object of the sight ;  
 Then less can that which flows from it be seen.  
 Separate from matter, and of colour void,  
 Dark seated, love shines only in effects.  
 These are a guileless faithful lover's thoughts,  
 True love alone will love's return obtain.

## VI.

My song, thou mayst securely take thy way  
 Where pleaseth thee ; for thou art so adorned,  
 That greatly shall thy reasoning be praised  
 By persons who have understanding meet :  
 To stay with others thou hast no desire.

## NOTES ON THE CANZONE.

"Donna mi prega, perchè voglio dire."

Obs.—This whole canzone is a complete illustration of the Horacian aphorism, "*Brevis esse laboro obscurus fio.*" To make it intelligible an extended paraphrase would be necessary ; but the author's meaning, even with the assistance of the four commentators, is not made sufficiently clear and rational to me to induce me to attempt one. A few notes, however, may be acceptable to the reader.

STANZA I.—Proposes eight inquiries respecting love ;

two of which are answered in each of the four following stanzas :—

l. 1. "Donna mi prega," &c. By Donna, is meant Guido Orlandi, in the opinion of Professor Rossetti. Donna, in the old Italian poets, being often only a personification of Anima ; but implying a superior mind, "Anima dominante." Dante, commenting on the words, "Donna gentile," (Convito, Canz. II., Stanza 3) says, "Per donna gentile s'intende la nobile anima d'ingegno e libera nella sua propria potestà, che è la ragione." (Conv. Trat. III. Cap. XIV.) So, in the canzone of Guinicelli, "Al cor gentil, &c.," of which we have given a translation, St. 6, l. 1, "Donna, Dio mi dirà, che presumesti !" Donna, which we have translated "Fair spirit," can, from what follows, mean only the poet himself. We have seen that Donna, in the introductory apologue of Egidio Colonna, is put for the divinity Love, made female, to adapt it to this canzone. See the ingenious arguments on this subject in Rossetti's Com. Anal. della Div. Com. vol. ii., Disamina, cap. x.

l. 2. "D' un accidente," i. e., accident, not substance, a mental affection here.

l. 3. "Che è chiamato amore ;" i. e., is called love improperly ; meaning, Frachetta says, that the name should be exclusively confined to divine love. Del Garbo observes, "Della cagione il perchè questa passione si chiama amore, non mi curo di parlare, perocchè de' nomi non debbe essere niuna cura, conciosiacosachè noi conosciamo la essenza della cosa ; perocchè, secondo el filosofo, i nomi alle cose si pongono a beneplacito."

l. 5. "Conoscente chero ;" i. e., I invite the experienced in love. "Chi per pruova intenda amore." Petr.

l. 8. "Natural dimostramento ;" i. e., Demonstration drawn from natural and moral philosophy.

STANZA II.—Replies to questions 1 and 2, "Where is love's seat, and how is it produced ?"

l. 4. "Da Marte viene, e fa dimora." The comment of Egidio Colonna on the first four lines, showing the propriety of the simile, is excellent ; but too long for insertion. He finishes with observing, that darkness is the usual symbol of evil, light of good ; that the influence of Mars generates strife and disquiet ; and that disquietude is permanent in love.

l. 5. "Sensato nome ;" i. e., l' appetito concupiscibile dell' anima. E. C. Del Rosso prefers and defends the reading, "Creato da sensato Nume."

l. 7. "Vien da veduta forma, che s' intende;" i. e., "l'immagine della cosa prima contemplata." E. C. Beauty first seen, then contemplated by the mental eye.

l. 8. "Possibile," and "passibile intelletto," are disputed readings; and whether an imaginative or reasoning, a receptive or operative faculty, is meant in this place is also disputed.

l. 10. "Pesanza," "posanza," "possanza," are disputed readings. Frachetta's explanation has been here followed; but the connecting an idea of weight, descent, and gravity with love seems so absurd, that E. C.'s reading, "posanza," may be preferred; and l. 10 and 11 might be thus translated:—

A place in which it never has repose,  
For constant is its nature still to change.

We shall refer the reader to the various and widely differing interpretations given by the commentators of the remainder of this stanza, which seem to be obtained by great violence done to grammatical construction, and to the common meaning of words; as may indeed be said of most of the obscurities of the canzone.

STANZA III.—Replies to questions 3 and 4, "What may be love's virtue and its power?"

l. 1. "Non è virtute." It is not strictly one of the moral virtues, but is often a virtue in its effects.

l. 2. "Che è perfezione;" i. e., beauty, corporeal and intellectual.

l. 4. "Fuor di salute," &c. Love is strictly not only not a virtue, but often partakes in its effects of the nature of vice.

l. 7. "Di sua potenza," &c. He shows that its power may induce death; both corporeal and intellectual. The physician Del Garbo's comment is minute on describing the fatal consequences to health of being crossed in love. *Passioni sono vere passioni quando sono sfrenate. Ottimamente prova che amore sente del vizio.* Frachetta.

STANZA IV.—Replies to questions 5 and 6. "What is love's essence, and each change it undergoes?"

l. 2. "Di misura torna." Cioè, diventa misurabile. Del Rosso. Cioè, ha suo compimento all' hora che nostro volere è molto fuori di sua natura. Frachetta.

l. 3. "Non s' adorna, &c." L' animo nel quale è amore non ha posa nè termine in niun grado. L' adornimento dell' animo è la temperanza delle passioni. E. C.

l. 5. Frachetta understands this line differently, and to

mean that beauty and strength, and the whole figure may suffer and fall away from continued apprehension of losing the beloved. The interpretation of E. Colonna has been followed. His justification of it is too long for admission.

l. 7. "Che in gente di valor," &c., adopting the sentiment of Guinicelli. "Al cor gentil ripara sempre amore."

l. 8. "La nuova qualità," &c. Del Rosso understands this differently from Frachetta, and as follows:—Questa nuova qualità, cioè maravigliosa e strana qualità, muove ancora la parte irascibile; che veramente strano merita d'esser chiamato questo affetto, poichè avendo nome, amore, odia; e regnando nella parte concupiscibile si traggia nella contraria, che è l'irascibile.

The three last lines of the stanza are understood by the Archbishop to represent love's captive as a prisoner, in a dungeon, chained to a pillar, and trying in vain to find relief in change of position.

STANZA V. Replies to the two last questions, 7 and 8. "What the delight to which love owes its name, and whether to the eye it can be shown." Or, in the words of Del Rosso, Quando acquista qualità d'amore; e se è visibile.

l. 1. "Di simil tragge," &c.; *i. e.*, The sentiment does not deserve the name of love unless there be reciprocal regard, E. C. Egli acquista natura e condizione d'amore mediante simile sguardo. Del Rosso.

l. 3. "Non può coperto star," &c. Come l'impressione della luna si manifesta quantunque sia occulta, per li nuovi muovimenti del mare, così è dell'amore, il quale non è altro se non una impressione nell'animo della cosa amata. E. C.

l. 5. "Che tal voler," &c. The Archbishop says, True love is proved by fear in three ways; the fear of not obtaining the object beloved: the fear of losing her if obtained; and the fear of losing her love. He adds, Quando l'animo per isperienza spesse volte, e duramente è punto pur da paura, allhora l'amore è provato ed esperto esser verace. A questo cotale amore, il quale di simil complessione è tratto, il quale non può star coperto, e 'l qual è da dette paure esperto, si conviene propriamente questo nome amore: ove nota, che amore tanto è a dire, quanto cosa che è senza amarore; ed anchè tanto è a dire, quanto cosa che è sempre con amarore; ed anchè quanto dir cosa senza costume; ed anchè tanto è a dire, quanto cosa a cui è congiunto morte; perciocchè per esso

ogni altra virtù nell' animo muore ; ed anchè tanto è a dire, quanto cosa senza morte, e questo s' intende specialmente dell' amor divino.

l. 7. "Non si può conoscer per lo viso." Che tanto è a dire, non si può mostrarlo, nè additarlo sì che gli occhi di colui a cui tu lo mostri lo veggano. Le cose si conoscono per due vie ; l' una è de' sensi, e l' altra dell' intelletto ; non nega che per via dell' intelletto l' uomo non possa conoscerlo. Del Rosso. Frachetta observes that this query, the eighth, is reserved for the last, because the other seven have called for an affirmative answer, and this for a negative. He adds, E noi sappiamo, che l' affermazione va innanzi alla negatione. He observes also that it is called for to refute a vulgar error, originating in the fancy of poets and painters, who have represented Love as a boy, naked, and with wings, and armed with a bow and quiver. A statue, in the beautiful gardens of Ermenonville near Chantilly, before the Revolution, represented Love differently, his only emblem being a burning heart which he held in his hand, like Love in the first sonnet of the Vita Nuova: on the pedestal were these pretty lines—

N'offrant qu'un cœur à la Beauté,  
Nud comme la Vérité,  
Sans armes comme l'Innocence,  
Sans ailes comme la Constance,  
Tel fut l'Amour dans le siècle d'or,  
On ne le trouve plus, quoiqu'on le cherche encore.

l. 9. "Forma non si vede." Forma, o ver figura, non si vede per se stessa. Del Rosso.

l. 11. "D' essere diviso." Cioè seperato da materia. Del Rosso.

l. 14. "Che solo di costui nasce mercede." The Archbishop explains the line thus: Sempre da costui, dalla parte della cosa amata nasce mercede, cioè rendesi il prezzo, lo quale è debito e mercede di detto amore, lo qual debito è perfetta riamatione.

Other interpretations of the concluding lines of this celebrated canzone are necessarily omitted ; the notes and illustrations having reached the prescribed limit, although they have not proceeded beyond the first sonnet of the Vita Nuova. The reader who has been sufficiently interested to wish for further information, must have recourse to the old authors, whose works have been mentioned, and who have laboriously travelled over the same curious, obscure, uninviting, but to me not uninteresting road. *Finis chartæque viseque.*



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